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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the researchers draw on their experience with a professional development project to propose a model for studying the formation and development of teacher community. The project described brought together 22 English and social studies teachers, as well as a Special Educator and an ESL teacher, from an urban high school for a period of 2 1/2 years. The teachers met twice a month to read together in the field of history and literature and to work on an interdisciplinary curriculum. This detailed account of the first 18 months of the project sheds new light on definitions of professional community, its stages of development, and the challenges that confront community in the workplace of high schools. One of the challenges consists of the need to negotiate an "essential tension" at the heart of teachers' professional community. Among this group of teachers, many felt that the primary reason to meet was to improve classroom practices and student learning, while others were more interested in the potential for continuing intellectual development in the subjects they taught. The researchers--who deliberately built the essential tension into the project--claim that these two views must both be respected in any successful attempt to create and sustain intellectual community in the workplace. The

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researchers also describe the challenges of maintaining diverse perspectives within a community and how familiar fault lines--both in society and in school--threaten the pursuit of community. The paper includes a model of the markers of community formation--as manifested in participants' talk and actions--and concludes with a discussion of why teachers must continue to care about professional communities. (Contains 33 notes, 109 references, 2 figures, and a table of data.) (Author/SR)

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What Makes Teacher Community Different from a Gathering of Teachers?

An Occasional Paper
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Abstract

In this paper, the authors draw on their experience with a professional development project to propose a model for studying the formation and development of teacher community. The project they describe brought together 22 English and social studies teachers, as well as a Special Educator and an ESL teacher, from an urban high school for a period of 2 1/2 years. The teachers met twice a month to read together in the field of history and literature and to work on an interdisciplinary curriculum. This detailed account of the first 18 months of the project sheds new light on definitions of professional community, its stages of development, and the challenges that confront community in the workplace of high schools. One of the challenges consists of the need to negotiate an "essential tension" at the heart of teachers' professional community. Among this group of teachers, many felt that the primary reason to meet was to improve classroom practices and student learning, while others were more interested in the potential for continuing intellectual development in the subjects they taught. The authors—who deliberately built the essential tension into the project—claim that these two views must both be respected in any successful attempt to create and sustain intellectual community in the workplace. The authors also describe the challenges of maintaining diverse perspectives within a community and how familiar fault lines—both in society and in school—threaten the pursuit of community. The paper includes a model of the markers of community formation— as manifested in participants' talk and actions—and concludes with a discussion of why we must continue to care about professional communities.

In Pursuit of Teacher Community

The word community is at risk of losing its meaning. From the prevalence of terms such as "communities of learners," "discourse communities," and "learning communities" to "school community," "teacher community," or "communities of practice," it is clear that *community* has become an obligatory appendage to every educational innovation. Yet aside from linguistic kinship, it is not clear what features, if any, are shared across terms. This confusion is most pronounced in the ubiquitous "virtual community," where, by paying a fee or typing a password, anyone who visits a web site automatically becomes a "member" of the community.

We are not the first to urge caution about the profligate uses of the term community. In the early 1990s, researchers such as Judith Warren Little and Milbrey McLaughlin raised concerns about importing and applying notions of community from literatures in sociology, social work, and anthropology to the specific and unique contexts of schools. In work from the Stanford Center on School Context, Perry (1997) noted that research had not yet "been able to identify and investigate the dimensions which constitute [teacher] professional community or to discover how each of these dimensions work to support or undermine teaching" (p. 37). Nonetheless, there is no shortage of theoretical formulations of how community is supposed to function in educational settings. In his review, Westheimer (1998) pointed to five commonplaces in theories of community (interdependence, interaction/participation, shared interests, concern for individual and minority views, and meaningful relationships), drawing on diverse thinkers such as Philip Selznick, John Dewey, Maxine Greene, Nel Noddings, and Robert Bellah. But in the end Westheimer came to the same conclusion as others. "Researchers," he wrote, "could benefit from a stronger conceptualization of communities based in empirical research" (p. 148).

What is clear from even a cursory review of the literature is the tendency to bring community into being by linguistic fiat ("virtual community" is only the baldest example).[1] Groups of people become community, or so it would seem, by the flourish of a researcher's pen. In this sense, researchers have yet to formulate criteria that would allow them to distinguish between a *community* of teachers and a *group of teachers* sitting in a room for a meeting. This conceptual blur raises the question of what, if anything, the construct of community adds to existing accounts of schooling. Compounding this problem is the fact that studies of community typically examine already-formed groups. Consequently, we have little sense of how teachers forge the bonds of community, struggle to maintain them, work through the inevitable conflicts of social relationships, and form the structures to sustain relationships over time. Without understanding such processes, we have little to guide us as we try to create community (*whatever* it may mean!) in settings where it doesn't already exist.[2]

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1 We recognize that virtual environments offer many possibilities for community that are just being explored by researchers. Our concern, however, is the loose use of "community" that attends many new technological innovations. As an example, consider the description of a new on-line partnership between university scholars and high school students that claims it will use "email to create a common intellectual community among the different institutions" ("Schools & Scholars Bridges the Divide," 2000, p. 2). This claim is offered as self-evident without any specification of what community means (beyond participating in a joint listserve), how it will be evaluated, and how project coordinators will know if they have succeeded or failed in "creating community."

2 In other fields, such as sociology, social work, and social psychology, a broad literature exists on the formation of groups and group dynamics. See, for example, the classic works of Homans (1950), Yalom (1995), and Merton (1968).

The Declaration of Community

As researchers engaged in a long-term study of teacher community, we are as guilty as anyone of these sins. Five years ago we applied for and received a large grant to create a "community of teacher learners" in a large urban high school. After reviewing the educational literature on community, we formulated a model based on the structural features of the urban high school (e.g., time and resources); departmental organization (based on work by Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995); intellectual features of cooperative learning environments (drawing largely on Brown and Campione's work on communities of learners, 1994; Brown, 1992), as well as our own prior work on pedagogical content knowledge and subject-specific pedagogy (Grossman, 1990; Wilson & Wineburg, 1993). We located our project in a large urban high school, where members from two different departments (English and history) came together over joint work: the exploration of understanding in the humanities that would eventually lead to an interdisciplinary humanities curriculum.

Here we draw on our experiences with this project, along with the work of others, to propose a model of teacher community. This is the first of three articles based on this project. In this paper we describe the group during the first 18 months of the project. We begin by laying out some of the conceptual and theoretical issues related to community and uses of it in school environments. Using our own project as a case, we discuss the developmental trajectory of intellectual community among teachers and show how unprepared we were for the challenges we faced. Finally, we discuss how community manifests in speech and action, noting along the way the twisting path of pursuing community in an urban high school. We end by addressing the "so what" question: What is community good for and why should we even care about it?

In a second paper (Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 1998), we describe more fully how we analyzed the learning of both individuals and the group as a whole. We explain our coding scheme at some length, a scheme that draws upon the work of Robert Scholes (1985) to distinguish different levels of reading in our group discussions. Such a coding scheme is essential if we are to make claims about changes in the intellectual quality of our discussions over time. In the third paper (Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, in progress), we describe the final year of the project, a year that was characterized by the contradictions of conflict and cohesion. It is in this final paper that we address directly the fragility of community.

We offer our experience not as a success story (as will soon become clear, for every rousing success we experienced, we weathered an equally dismal failure), but as an instructive case that sheds light on the birth pangs of teacher community (cf. Thomas, Wineburg, Grossman, Mhyre, & Woolworth, 1998; Wineburg & Grossman, 1996). We offer a bounded history of our project, drawing on data from the first half of our three years together. Confining our narrative to the first 18 months allows us to focus on how a group of people came together, struggled to find a common language, and worked to create a collective vision for on-going professional development in the workplace. In telling our story, we deliberately alternate between theoretical aspects of community that go beyond our setting and the unique features of individuals and a context that have no direct parallels elsewhere. Our goal is to tie our conceptualization to the concrete particulars of a single setting but also to show how our experience

speaks to issues that extend beyond this one school and district. Before we turn to our story, we offer a brief review of the construct of community as it has been understood more generally in the social sciences and humanities.

Community at Large

The association between community and the good life reaches across most religious, cultural, and philosophical traditions where the value of individuals working together for the common good is upheld and respected. When German sociologist Ferdinand Toennies (1887/1963) used the word *gemeinschaft* to differentiate community from *gesellschaft* (society), he did so because in community, he observed, individuals cultivate stronger bonds of connectedness than they do in the larger society, which is often experienced as impersonal and alienating. Communities, he noted, are more apt to be defined by close and loyal relationships and a stable social structure.

Our research comes at a time when many have expressed concern over the loss of traditional social community. Numerous popular and scholarly accounts have detailed the ways in which people are less grounded by place, less likely to know their neighbors, and less committed to a civic life than during any other time in our nation's past (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Etzioni, 1993; Oldenburg, 1989; Putnam, 1995). Traditional communities built on personal and active engagement in organized groups have withered in favor of more individual pursuits, like those symbolized by the "virtual communities" we alluded to earlier, where people drop in and out of social networks by choice—not through association or shared purpose. Many theorists warn that historical notions of social responsibility and commitment are threatened by an unrestrained culture of individualism. What we risk losing, many agree, are those communal spaces where meaningful social interaction broadens people's sense of self beyond the "me" and "I" into the "we" and "us."

In *Habits of the Heart* (1985) Robert Bellah and his associates describe this loss as a decline in civic membership, the intersection point between one's personal and social identity. Americans, they claim, have disengaged from the body politic and are less involved in the civic institutions that Tocqueville saw as softening and containing the individualistic tendencies at the heart of American society. In response to this perceived crisis of individualism, a social movement that aims to restore and revitalize the community ideal has emerged. Amitai Etzioni (1993), writing as a spokesperson for the communitarian movement, proclaims that rights now outweigh responsibilities in American society. What is needed, he argues, is "a renewal of social bonds" and a commitment to a more moral and ethical form of public life based on shared values and mutual understanding. Similarly, sociologist Robert Putnam (1995), in his widely-cited paper "Bowling Alone," suggests that current social conditions reflect a decline in "social capital," a term he uses to invoke the social networks, norms, and levels of trust that "facilitate" how well people cooperate and work together for their own mutual benefit. Vibrant communities, according to Putnam, have a "substantial stock of social capital" that makes life easier and more meaningful for its members.

Because of the nature of our work in teacher community, we are most interested in community at the local level, where face-to-face interactions, dialogue, and trust are necessary ingredients to building cohesion. We find Bellah et al.'s (1985) definition of community to be instructive in this regard. They stipulate that a community is "a group of people who are socially interdependent, who participate

together in discussion and decision making, and who share certain practices that both define the community and are nurtured by it" (p. 333). Based on our experience, we concur with Bellah et al. when they note that such communities are not quickly or easily formed. It takes time for individuals to develop a history together so that they, in effect, become a "community of memory" where public discussion revolves around members retelling the "constitutive narrative" of the group.

We are also interested in the formation of group norms and how they come to define community. For legal theorist Stephen Carter (1998), norms represent the shared moral life of a community—that element which encourages participants to discipline their desires "for the sake of membership in the group." Participation in genuine communities is marked by civility, or what Carter refers to as the "etiquette of democracy" whereby individuals are mindful about how they express dissent and negotiate disagreement. As we will demonstrate, in our attempt to establish community at one school we were confronted from the start with challenges over how disagreements were expressed in the context of a "professional" community, where individuals already had a prior history with one another and where there was often more at stake than winning an argument.

In writing about professional community, we acknowledge that a rich history of integrating notions of professionalism with community extends back to the efforts of progressive period reformers and social workers, who developed shared systems of support and fellowship around child welfare practices and policies (Muncy, 1991). However, for applied social researchers interested in documenting the formation of professional community, especially among teachers, there is less on which to build. One of the first scholars to link the construct of community to issues of professionalism was William J. Goode (1957). Goode observed that professions such as law and medicine vary in the extent to which they are, indeed, a community, but that these professions share certain "characteristics" of community. Members of the same profession share a sense of identity and common values; they share the same role definitions in relation to members and non-members alike; they share a common language; and they control the reproduction of the group through selection procedures and socialization processes. Professional community, Goode observed, is a "contained community," a group of people who exist within the structural constraints and supports of the larger society. This metaphor of containment applies as well to our efforts at building a community embedded within the larger organization of the school, the district, and the profession at large.

Goode's work, however, sheds light on the unique features and challenges of teaching compared to the touchstones of medicine and law. Depending on grade level, subject area, prior education, and type of students served, teachers vary in their understanding of the goals of teaching, the purposes of education, the structure of the curriculum, the role of tests and assessments, and just about anything that has to do with teaching. Focusing on any one of Goode's criteria highlights the problems of establishing professional community in teaching. For example, teachers in public school settings often have little to do with selection and recruitment of new teachers, a task that rests in the hands of administrators often removed from the day-to-day demands of the classroom. When it comes to policing the ranks and issuing censures to enforce group norms, teachers accomplish this task informally: Official sanctions (with repercussions for tenure and employment) are typically administered at a district level. Compared to medicine or law, education has not been able to forge a shared language of norms and values, and practically every significant question in education remains contentious. Indeed, one way to interpret the

standards movement sweeping the country (including the formation of the National Board of Professional Standards) is as an attempt to create a collective professional vision for teaching where none has existed before.

Professional Community and Teacher Learning

A key rationale for teacher community is that it provides an ongoing venue for teacher learning (Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996; McLaughlin & Talbert, in press; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Nelson & Hammerman, 1996). The interweaving of teacher learning and professional community is prominent in discussions of the embedded contexts in which teachers work, such as national networks, district committees, and state-level organizations (McLaughlin & Talbert, in press). But when we turn to the school level (particularly the high school), the most logical venue for day-to-day community, we run into a series of structural, cultural, and vocational impediments.

The simple fact is that in the typical American high school the structures for on-going intellectual community do not exist.[3] One of the peculiarities of the high school, from the teacher's perspective, is that learning aimed at deepening knowledge of the subject matters of instruction must be done *outside* of the workplace, during so-called "free time" (hence, the National Endowment for the Humanities or NEH *summer* institute). Despite lip service to lifelong teacher learning, the organizational, vocational, and cultural norms of American schools conspire to create a situation in which community for teacher learning is found (if found at all) outside the workplace.

Much has been written about the occupational norms of privacy that work against adults learning together in the workplace (Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975). These norms are maintained, in part, by the temporal organization of the school day, which limits teachers' interactions to brief lunchtime encounters or to the rushed minutes before and after school. The situation is not much better in the principal venue for school-based teacher learning: the professional inservice day (Miller & Lord, 1995). The episodic nature of such inservice education works against sustained intellectual community. By their very structure, inservice days are confined to technical and immediate issues, such as learning a new assessment scheme, translating test results into lesson plans, implementing a new curriculum or textbook series, and so on.

Efforts to build intellectual community have historically taken place outside of school walls, thus removing teacher learning from both the temporal and spatial milieu of the workplace. Teachers leave the school building to travel to an institute, often far away, to learn.[4] While these institutes are often collegial experiences, in which one works and learns with others, teachers do not learn with the people they rub shoulders with in the workplace. Although summer learning experiences can be rewarding to those who participate, such experiences represent problematic issues regarding teacher learning. On a

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3 Much has been written on the barriers to developing a professional community in schools (cf. Bird & Little, 1986; Lieberman, 1988; Smylie, 1994). Obstacles include both structural considerations, as well as the occupational organization. One of the biggest barriers to the formation of intellectual community in the high school is time. For example, Shollenberger and Swaim (1999) have shown that the average high school teacher contracted to work 35 hours a week teaches 125 students per day in five classes. In order for a teacher to spend more than 10 minutes reviewing the written work of each student and to have 15 minutes to plan for each class, Shollenberger and Swaim calculated that the average high school teacher would have to work 70 hours/week.

4 Many summer institutes, including Breadloaf for English teachers and Summermath for math teachers, have succeeded in creating rich environments for teacher learning (Schifter, 1996). The NEH has a long tradition of funding summer institutes that provide teachers with opportunities to learn from cutting-edge scholars.

structural level, they suggest that learning is a "summer activity" accomplished during teachers' free time, rather than an on-going part of professional life. In practice, these learning opportunities are often seen as optional (it is a rare school that *requires* teachers to attend an NEH institute) and as attracting a particular kind of volunteer: individuals passionate about their own learning and who can afford the time and tuition. Most important, the voluntary nature of such activities means that there is already an intellectual match between the programs offered and those who volunteer, a fact that raises questions about the teachers who do not participate. In many cases, teachers most in need of such an intellectual broadening may be least likely to volunteer.

The biggest drawback to the summer or weekend approach to teacher learning rests on its implicit assumption that it is possible to take individuals out of their workplaces, transform them in other settings, and then return them to an unchanged workplace to do battle with the status quo. As Seymour Sarason (cf. 1990) has steadfastly argued for two decades, such models of teacher change may affect individuals but they are unlikely to change the workplace in any significant way. We argue, therefore, for a vision of professional community that is located within the workplace, offering the possibility of individual transformation as well as the transformation of social settings in which individuals work.

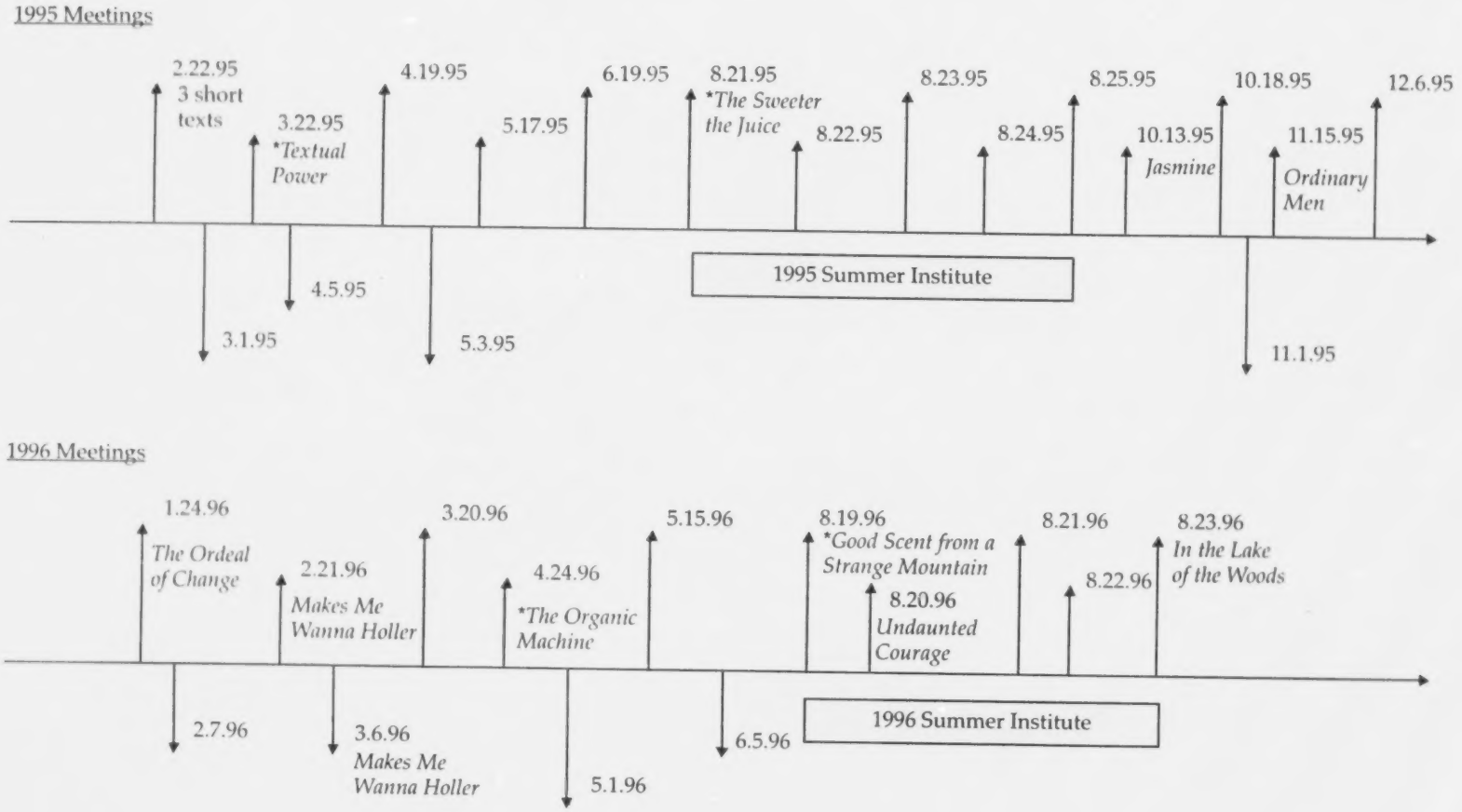
Getting Started in the Workplace

As we noted at the start, we created a "community of teacher learners" by declaration and invited teachers to join us. We located our project in the context of the workplace by soliciting participation from two departments, English and history, in an urban Seattle high school. Through locating our project within the school, we hoped to effect change not only in individuals but in the culture of the workplace. What we did not fully appreciate until later was how working with a group of teachers who had a long history together would affect the formation of community.

In many ways, starting with a group of colleagues who have worked together is worse than convening a group of perfect strangers (Wineburg & Grossman, in press-c; cf. Rothman, Erlich, & Tropman, 1995). Unlike the people who attend a summer institute from different venues and are often on their best behavior, our group had a rich and not always congenial history. They had heard about each other from students, worked together on school projects, engaged in past skirmishes. The conflicts and the tensions of the workplace accompanied us from the start. Many teachers had fully developed opinions of each other. In most cases these impressions were developed not from actually seeing one another teach, but from years (in some cases, decades) of reports by 15- and 16-year-old informants. We also did not choose departments distinguished by a collegial culture. In fact, these two departments rarely met formally and only then for pragmatic tasks. All of these factors made the creation of community more difficult but also more realistic.

A second crucial feature distinguished our project from the volunteer summer institute. We were able to draw into our fold teachers who normally would not seek out "high-brow" intellectual experiences of national humanities groups. First, the stipend we offered for time spent on the project outside of class (approximately $1,200/year) was an incentive for some. Second, the on-site nature of the project made participation convenient. Third, and most important, while all teachers in the project were technically volunteers, there were several teachers whom we came to think of as *impressed volunteers*. Just as sailors abducted on the open seas were pressed into service, there were instances in

Figure 1. Project Meetings (with accompanying readings) February 1995 — August 1996



* Starred readings are those that are used as chief data sources in this paper.

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our project where the department chairs "strongly recommended" to teachers that participation would be a "good idea." Given the stakes and the importance (particularly among newer teachers) of staying in the chair's good graces, the suggestion to participate carried much weight. The gentle persuasion of department chairs resulted in the participation of several teachers who were highly unlikely to seek outside professional development related to the nature of understanding in the humanities.

Teachers in these two departments came together monthly for an entire day to read and discuss literary and historical works and to plan an interdisciplinary humanities curriculum. Grant money allowed us to provide substitutes during these all-day meetings so that teachers could focus on their own reading and reflection. The monthly meetings were supplemented by after school meetings every other week and by a five-day retreat during the summer (see Figure 1).

Our own role in this project was to convene the group and, with the help of the two department chairs, to set the initial frame for the meetings. While we documented the entire process (recording all meetings, arranging individual interviews with all participants, collecting and collating all materials from the project over three years), we saw ourselves as a cross between "project organizers" and "project leaders." We had no set curriculum for teachers other than a desire to provide opportunities for continued learning and interactions around the subject matters of English and history. We straddled a rather ambiguous dual role: as researchers, documenting the progress of the project; and as co-participants, reading books, discussing curriculum, and sharing our own ideas with the group of learners. Our efforts to share leadership occasionally frustrated some members of the group who wanted us to take the more familiar role of group leader. Because we had built multiple activities into our project, teachers also wanted greater clarity about our purposes as a group and argued about how our time together should be spent.

The Essential Tension of Teacher Community

We see teacher community as a form of professional community, which makes it different in key ways from other forms of community in social life. For example, when a group of boaters comes together in a "boating community," their focus is self-referential; they are concerned with their own common interests, their common goals and aspirations, and their own mutual support. Teachers' professional community, in contrast, looks outward to the multiple contexts in which teachers work. National, state, district, and school contexts all help shape definitions of the profession and the role of teachers.

But *professional* community, as we use the term in this article, must be concerned with its clientele. For example, when communities of doctors or nurses come together, their focus is on the well being of their patients. Similarly, for a group of teachers to emerge as a professional community, the well being of students must be a central consideration. According to this criterion for professional community, not all gatherings of teachers, even those in which teachers offer each other fellowship and support, constitute *professional* community. Teachers who gather to read mystery novels, even if they do so in the school library, would not meet our definition of professional community.

The improvement of professional practice is the most common rationale in formulations of teacher community and constitutes one pole in what we refer to as the *essential tension of teacher community*. In settings across the country, teachers come together to write new curriculum, create new assessments,

and formulate standards and benchmarks aimed at improving practice and enhancing student learning. This form of teacher community (and teacher professional development) carries with it enormous face validity among teachers, as well as among policy makers and the public at large.

We believe, however, that a *second* aspect of teacher community must be considered if teaching is to truly emerge as a "learning profession" (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999). This second, less familiar pole in the essential tension focuses not on teachers' mastery of a new pedagogical technique or new form of group work. Rather, it highlights teachers' *continuing intellectual development* in the subject matters of the school curriculum. This aspect of teacher community is predicated on the belief that effective teachers are lifelong students of their subjects. As lifelong learners, teachers must continue to grow in knowledge, breadth, and understanding and keep up with changes and paradigm shifts in their disciplines. The vision of the teacher as exemplar of the lifelong learner is central in classical formulations of teaching, a fact that is preserved in languages as diverse as Chinese, Hebrew, and Norwegian, in which the word for "teacher" is the interative, or intensive form, for learner.

We claim that these two angles on teacher development—one focused explicitly on improvement of student learning, the other focused on teacher as student of subject matter—do not always mix harmoniously. In most cases they do not mix at all. District-based inservices focus almost exclusively on pedagogical techniques or the use of new curricula, assessments, or textbooks aimed at improving student learning. The implementation of new teacher learning is intended to be immediate. Summer institutes in the humanities, on the other hand, make claims about "renewing teachers" by reacquainting them with the excitement of the college seminar. These venues typically focus on disciplinary content, usually giving no more than a symbolic nod to lesson planning or classroom application.

Inherent in these two different approaches is a contrast between the promise of direct applicability in the classroom and the more distant goal of intellectual renewal, a goal more difficult to see and measure. The challenge in creating intellectual community for teachers in the workplace is to heed both aims simultaneously: to maintain a focus on students while also creating a structure for teachers to engage as learners with the subject matters they teach. This latter goal, in contrast to the former, has no school-based tradition on which to build. Few examples exist of teachers successfully maintaining these dual agendas in the hurried context of the urban high school.

Our claim is that these two aspects of teacher learning *must* be combined in any successful attempt to create and sustain teacher intellectual community in the workplace. Teacher community must be equally concerned with the learning of students and the learning of teachers. Providing for both levels of teacher learning, and attending to the relationship and tension between them, becomes a central task facing any professional community for teachers.

Uncommon Ground: Enacting the Essential Tension

We built the essential tension into our project from the inception of our work. We advertised our community as an opportunity to develop both an interdisciplinary humanities curriculum and to engage in discussions of history and literature. Not all teachers came equally interested in both parts of this agenda. Some were only interested in developing curriculum, while others were more interested in reading together. Our enactment of this essential tension ensured that we attracted a diverse group of teachers. It also embodied another aspect built into our project design: our belief that successful forms of

professional development must offer *multiple corridors for participation*. Given the diversity of experience, educational level, background, and individual tastes among teachers in the urban high school, a project that offers only one corridor for professional development, by necessity, ignores the needs and interests of many other groups. There were clearly subgroups of teachers who would not have joined our project had it focused only on curriculum development or solely on reading texts. The diversity of our group also meant that we spent much of our time during the first year trying to balance the differing agendas and expectations people brought to the group.

At the heart of our work was the belief that before we could create interdisciplinary curriculum (a need felt by teachers and one that elicited wide school-level and district support), we first had to get to know each other as thinkers and learners. We had to grapple with and understand the two disciplines we planned to integrate. To lay the foundation for understanding, we borrowed the model of book clubs that meet in people's homes and imported it into the context of the urban high school. From our first meetings, we read short texts (poems, primary source documents, etc.) in small groups. For example, at our second full-day meeting, we compiled and read a set of texts that included a section from the Pulitzer prize-winning history, *A Midwife's Tale* by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich; a section of the poem, "Homage to Mistress Bradstreet" by John Berryman; a poem by Anne Bradstreet, a colonial poet; and finally, an excerpt from an American history textbook that described the lives of colonial women.

At our first whole group meeting, teachers agreed that one goal of an interdisciplinary humanities curriculum would be to teach students to "read critically." We were not able, however, to arrive at a satisfying definition of critical reading to which all could agree. We hoped that this follow-up textual exercise in reading difficult texts and a short reading from Robert Scholes' (1985) book *Textual Power* would spark a conversation about what it meant to "read critically."

Instead of a lively conversation based on our own reading of texts, the whole group discussion floundered (see dialogue on next page). In trying to facilitate the discussion, Sam introduced the topic only to be met by 8 seconds of silence. In the first 20 turns of the discussion (4 min. 53 seconds), there are 47 seconds of interminable silence—particularly uncomfortable with 15 people sitting in a circle.

This early discussion was also characterized by unequal participation by the teachers. Lee, an experienced history teacher, dominated the interchange by holding the floor for more turns than any other participant.[5] Pam and Sam, as project facilitators, served as primary discussion brokers. Listening to the tapes of this discussion four years later, we are both surprised and chagrined by how "teacherly" we sounded in trying to get the discussion going. The initial exchanges have the feel of a fishing expedition, the worst form of recitation, in which the participants seem convinced that we, as group leaders, have specific answers in mind. Given the lack of common purpose, it is not surprising that we

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5 Twelve teachers were present at this meeting, 10 of whom contributed to the discussion. Of the teachers who spoke, Lee had 22 turns, which accounted for 29% of all turns. For purposes of comparison, the other nine teachers' turns were distributed more evenly: Mary (Special Ed) 13%, Helen (English) 11%, Olivia (ESL) 12%, Patricia (English) 11%, Alice (English), 7%, Grace (Social Studies) 5%, Tad (Social Studies, student intern) 9%, Barb (English) 3%, Nancy (English) 1%. Counting turns is only one measure for accounting for "floor time" in large group discussions. In terms of words spoken, Lee's 439 words accounted for 23% of all words spoken by teachers. Even when the initial structuring comments by Pam and Sam are factored into the total number of turns, Lee's contribution still remained high: 23% of all turns during the discussion.

found it difficult to sustain a coherent conversation. Most of the conversation followed the pattern of this opening exchange: relatively brief remarks punctuated by long silences.[6]

(01) Sam: ..Okay, ↑we——we ↑thought, we ↓hoped, we prayed that this exercise would shed some light on this notion of needing to teach students to read texts critically, which is something that everybody subscribes to- - -↓even when they hold completely divergent views. So let's see if we can—put some flesh on these bare bones.

((silence-8.5 seconds))

(02) Lee: What do you mean?

((group laughter))

(03) Pam: What is the experience that you had in the groups with the, with the text and ↑talking about what made the text *difficult* at those three different levels. ↑How does that shed any light on this issue of what it means to read texts critically?

(04) Lee: [Well I think, I think we definitely need to have—kids have some context before they ↓read these things.

((silence-9.5 seconds))

(05) Pam: We talked a lot about background knowledge is that?

(06) Lee: [Well, it's just—or what-what exactly? ↑Why? ↑Why are they reading this? —I mean why? What is the purpose of the assignment I guess? Not just background knowledge. That's—↓I think I was the only one who felt that way.

((laughter & joking asides))

(07) Female Voice: ((sarcastically)) This is a surprise?

(08) Alice: ((sarcastically)) Wasn't it the same last time?

(09) Patricia: ((jokingly)) Weren't you all by yourself last night?

(10) Alice: ((sarcastically)) [Is this your role Lee?]

(11) Pam: Who else?

(12) Barb: I—I think that its absolutely essential that you undertake the classroom work in the spirit of exploration, of tentativeness, of-of —multiple responses, of open-ended—speculation that—that, that has—that atmosphere has to exist in-in order to deal with the text. —And that there's never a sense from the teacher's part that, where Scholes was talking about kind of holding the goodies that, that we have the answers that we're trying to, you know,—play 20 questions with them that-that-that it has to be a collaborative effort where you're ↑not, you're not punished for even far out suggestions.

(13) Mary: mm-hm

((silence-5 seconds))

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6 We use the following diacritical marks to recreate our discussions as accurately as possible in the form of a textual transcript. In doing so, we have drawn on the work of Schiffrin (1987, 1994), Gee (1990), and Clark (1992).

1. ↑ ↓: Indicates rising and descending changes in intonation immediately prior to the rise or fall.
2. *Italics*: Words emphasized when spoken.
3. Capitalization: Capitalization is used to indicate words spoken with increased volume and emphasis.
4. [: A single left-handed bracket is used to indicate where overlapping utterances begin.
5.]: A single right-handed bracket is used to mark where overlapping utterances stop.
6. =: Equal signs are used to join different segments of a single speaker's utterance when part constitutes a continuous flow of speech that has been carried over to another line to accommodate an intervening interruption or overlapping utterance.
7. (( )): Double parentheses are used to characterize talk (e.g., tone, whisper, etc.) or details of the scene (e.g., laughter, pounding of the table, etc.)
8. -: Dashes are used to indicate a slight pause in a speaker's speech utterance and to separate repeated words during a continuous flow of speech.
9. _: An underline indicates where words were spoken but were unintelligible to the transcriber.

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This opening exchange illustrates our difficulties in defining a common purpose. Much of the discussion focused on speculations about the difficulties students would face in reading this particular set of texts, even though there was never a suggestion that these texts be used with students.

As the day-long meeting came to a close, the discussion trudged toward an anticlimactic convergence on the importance of using multiple texts to teach "critical reading." This pedagogical platform struck us as being as blurry and undefined as the one we started with. By the end of the session, we had barely touched on the two questions that we hoped would frame the discussion: (1) What does it mean to read critically? and (2) What makes critical reading difficult for students? As project facilitators, we wondered what went wrong and where to go next.

Pseudocommunity

As community begins to form there is a natural tendency by individuals to *play community*, to act as if they are already a community that shares values and common beliefs. Playing community, or *pseudocommunity* (cf. Peck, 1995), draws on cultural notions of interaction often found in middle-class, typically White, settings. The imperative of pseudocommunity is to "behave *as if* we all agree." An interactional congeniality is maintained by a surface friendliness, vigilant never to intrude on issues of personal space.[7]

The maintenance of pseudocommunity pivots on the suppression of conflict. Face-to-face interactions are regulated by a tacit understanding that it is "against the rules" to challenge others or press them too hard for clarification. This understanding paves the way for the *illusion of consensus*. Because there is no genuine follow-up in face-to-face interaction, conversation partners are able to speak at high levels of generality that allow each to impute his or her own meanings to the groups' abstractions. For example, if, among teachers, notions of "critical thinking" or "interdisciplinary curriculum" are never defined precisely, every discussion member can agree to a common cause without giving it a second thought.

Pseudocommunities regulate speech by appointing a facilitator to control discussion or by allowing a group member—often the most voluble or pushy—to seize the conversational reins. These group mouthpieces emerge not because they express the collective will (a will that in psuedocommunities remains vague) but because they are verbally fleet or because no one else is willing to challenge their dominance. In pseudocommunity, implicit rules dictate that discussion leaders make no attempt to elicit the thoughts of the whole group in order to bring underlying tensions or disagreements to the surface. Silence goes unquestioned because the tacit rules of interaction militate against direct interrogation or unexpected exchanges, such as publicly turning to someone next to you and asking, "What is *your* position on that last point?"

At the heart of pseudocommunity is the distinction between hidden and revealed, or to use the dramaturgical language of Erving Goffman (1959), the distinction between back stage and front stage. The key to maintaining a surface esprit de corps is the curtain separating front from back stage, and the

7 The term pseudo-community has been variously used. Our use here focuses on face-to-face relations that appear congenial because they tightly regulate the expression of conflict and dissent. The term has also been used in mass-communication research but in a different way. For example, Beniger (1987) uses the term to refer to mass-communications that appear personal and folksy, such as mass mailings in political campaigns written on personal stationary and printed to resemble hndwriting but which are actually generated by machines. Our use of the term here pursues a different direction.

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fact that only some group members are allowed behind the wings. So, for example, while nonverbal behavior may be noticed and registered by the group, it becomes the topic of back stage rather than front stage discussion. "Did you see Ed roll his eyes when Ann started speaking?" is something whispered furtively by the coffee dispenser but never brought before the whole group for public inspection. Even if the whole group hears a hurtful remark, such as a barb that masquerades as an innocent joke, the victim's wound is dressed off-stage (in the restroom, in the parking lot after the meeting, or on the phone that evening). If some type of redress is demanded of the offending party, it is an issue between individuals rather than a topic for the entire group. It is this fact that reveals the lie at the heart of pseudocommunity: *there is no authentic sense of shared communal space but only individuals interacting with other individuals.*

The predominant mode of interaction in pseudocommunity is what Goffman calls "impression management," whereby individuals "perform" identities that typically (but not always) reflect on them positively. We say not always because there are social roles that are performed not because they are flattering but because they achieve other desired ends. Thus, individuals may don the mask of victim who, through expressions of incompetence, hurt, or low self-esteem, seeks the group's sympathy.[8] The execution of roles in pseudocommunity goes smoothly as long as everyone gets to play the role he or she wants without being challenged by another player. But a threat to pseudocommunity—one which looms larger as brief infrequent meetings turn into longer more frequent ones—is the question of authenticity: Is a given player "authorized" to give a particular performance? In teaching, where social norms dictate a performance of competent, committed educator, the question before the group is the fit between an individual's publicly performed identity and the "book" on the performer in the region hidden from view. This hidden region is, of course, the classroom—seen daily by scores of students but largely veiled from the eyes of co-workers. Because information from this region can disrupt one's performed identity, access to which is guarded, and information from which is tightly controlled.[9]

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8 We recognize here the conceptual problems associated with the term "performing an identity," particularly for theorists who see identity as a fluid construct with no stable boundaries. Nonetheless, we find Goffman's examples compelling, particularly in the ordinary ways we construe social life. So, for example, newspaper reports about Rudolph Giuliani's withdrawal from the U.S. Senate campaign (e.g., *New York Times*, May 20, 2000, p. 1) draw attention to the discrepancy between Giuliani's performed identity as moralist (i.e., someone who advocated posting the Ten Commandments in every classroom) and revelations about his own marital infidelities. The undercurrent of these reports is the discrepancy between Giuliani's "identity performance" and his dubious qualifications to give it.

9 No feature of our project exemplified this better than our attempt to establish "video clubs" (cf. Fredriksen, Sipusik, Gamoran, & Wolfe, 1992). Part of our project design included the establishment of video clubs in which project participants showed excerpts from their teaching to a small group of colleagues. Our hope was that the video clubs might be used as a tool for teachers to elicit feedback from their colleagues and thus strengthen aspects of their classroom practice in the same way that videos are used in professions such as medicine, counseling, sports and law enforcement. In the end, however, we only had one day of video clubs because the majority of teachers in the project decided not to continue with it. We see two reasons for this. First, we introduced video work less than a year into the project which, in retrospect, was too premature given the levels of trust and respect needed to make such an activity a learning experience. Videos, more than any other feature of our project, contravene the norms of privacy in schools. The second reason for the demise of video clubs is that they posed a threat to the authenticity of one's performance. Paulo Freire has observed that videos "help us understand better our own practice and to perceive the gulf that almost always exists between what we say and what we do" (p. 121). We suggest that it is precisely the gulf between reality and performance that videos threaten to expose. Interpreted in these Goffman-like terms, video work represented a region of danger because if the quality of teaching captured on the video was not consistent with, or did not reinforce, the performance participants gave during project meetings, then one was at-risk for being seen as an impostor. The fact that teachers chose not to continue participating in this aspect of the project speaks to the enormous challenges of building intellectual community in schools that reaches into the interior and well-protected world of the individual classroom.

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Cracks in Pseudocommunity: Acknowledgement of Conflict

The tenuous consensus reached at the end of the "critical reading" discussion was short-lived. Two weeks later we got a call from Dave, an experienced English teacher with deep subject matter knowledge and widely respected for his dedication to students. Dave informed us that he was leaving the project three months after joining because he was disheartened by comments from several of the younger teachers during a small-group text exercise. Dave stressed that his decision had nothing to do with us, the contingent from the university. Rather, he was worried that if he stayed he would become impatient with colleagues and say things he would later regret. Dave's comment, "I'm better off staying to myself in my classroom and working with kids because I can make the most difference there" should be interpreted in light of professional norms that honor the commitment to student growth but which carry no parallel commitment to colleagues' growth. A second concern of Dave's was the worry that he might lose patience with his department chair. More was at stake here than if he lost his temper with a new teacher. Because his chair set his teaching schedule and controlled department resources, Dave figured that his most prudent course of action was to minimize contact.[10]

In the weeks between the second and fifth months of the project, it became increasingly difficult to ignore the cracks in pseudocommunity. Incidents of eye rolling, ridicule, and muttering under the breath continued to occur. Often this behavior came clothed in a jocularity that provoked laughter but left in its wake a residual sting. When Fred Ingram, a social studies teacher and coach of the baseball team, suggested a book for our upcoming summer institute he was cut off with the comment, "We're *not* going to all read the sports page!" Chuckles echoed, but the intent of putting Fred in his place was unmistakable.

Four months after we launched our project, our group of 22 teachers had divided into multiple factions and alliances. Pre-existing workplace conflicts, normally held in check by the limited contact during the school day, were given new life by our lengthy meetings. As project leaders we knew we needed to do something to hold the group together. In our darkest moments we feared that our three-year grant would finish two-plus years ahead of schedule. As we saw it, the most pressing need was to formulate some ground rules for civil discussion, some way to restore a safe linguistic space for all participants.

This situation laid bare our own lack of knowledge and skill in dealing with the predictable challenges of group dynamics. The emotional work of managing group interactions was outside the theoretical framework, located largely in cognitive psychology, that we brought to this project. Our own ambivalence about role, and the resulting ambiguity that came with it, got us into trouble. On the one hand, as university researchers keenly aware of the resentment teachers feel toward outside "experts,"

10 We believe Dave's initial departure from the project calls attention to, first and foremost, Little's (1990) work on the culture of isolation in schools. Dave's participation presented him within an opportunity to step away from the seclusion of his classroom and to engage collaboratively with colleagues. When Dave didn't like what he was confronted with, his initial reaction was to return to the private domain of his classroom, the most familiar and sanctioned venue in the vocational (as well as spatial) context of schools. We also believe it is important not to underestimate the role of choice in guiding Dave's actions. Giddens' (1979, 1984) writings on agency, Burke and Reitzes' (1981, 1991) research on identity, and the work of rational choice theorists (Scott, 1995) all speak to how individuals pursue their own interests. We interpret Dave's decision to leave the project as one he made to protect himself within the larger political context of his department. Rather than remain in the group and risk conflict with his chair, Dave perceived it to be in his best interests to remove himself from the situation. In other words, Dave chose the path of least resistance; the one that seemed to make the most sense in the existing social organization of the school.

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we worked hard to counteract the image of the university professor arriving on the scene with a binder of answers. Reluctant to take on this role, we may have been too hesitant to provide leadership that the group genuinely needed. On the other hand, we were also mindful of the tendency of funded projects to vanish once the money is gone. By sharing ownership of the group from the outset, we hoped to create leadership within the group that would help sustain the community beyond the time allotted to the grant. But we may have backed away from our role as leaders too quickly, particularly in responding to group dynamics.

As fractures in the group became apparent, people came to us and asked us to intervene. We patched together the project as best we knew how—with Band-Aids for individuals rather than splints for the group, through phone conversations with individual teachers late at night, side conversations during meetings, and e-mail correspondence. But these remedies were all conducted back stage, away from the whole community. Part of our strength in dealing with the group was that we were outsiders and generally seen as fair brokers. But secrets and asides thwart the formation of community. We knew that sooner or later we had to get these issues onto the main stage.

At a planning meeting for the summer institute with four of the teachers, we broached the issue of incivility and had a frank discussion about our fears that the project was falling apart. There was unanimous agreement that we could no longer avoid these issues and that they had to be brought into the open before any real work could get done. Lee (the lightning rod for several incidents) and Mary (a special education teacher who had emerged as an evenhanded member) agreed to take responsibility for starting a conversation with the whole group.

Our first week-long summer institute in August 1995 began with the issue of norms for discussion. Lee turned to the 23 teachers assembled and began:

> Today we want to have energized dialogue without judgment, without people having to be concerned about having their feelings hurt, having respect for each other. But the question is how to do that within the confines of this kind of process . . . and in democratic process some people are going to assert themselves more than others. The steering group talked about some of the problems we had during the year and that some people might have felt intimidated by some of the other people . . . we have department chairs and people who have been teaching a long time and people who are new in the building and there is a sense of who has the right to talk and who doesn't . . . What can we do so that everyone feels safe as a group but there is still a healthy exchange of ideas?

Lee paused and took a deep breath: "I know I tend to make quips but I hope I don't cross the line where these quips offend people. But if they do, they probably might put a damper on the conversation."

Lee's comments brought to the surface conflicts that had simmered for months. By formally acknowledging status differences, divisions, and hurt feelings, Lee's opening words marked an early step in the transition from a "meeting of teachers" to the formation of teacher community. For the first time in the group's history there was the conscious recognition of its own "groupness," and the spotlight turned on the less-than-smooth functioning of the group as a whole. Lee, known for his incisive barbs, offered a public confession about the effect of his comments on the group. His opening confession demonstrated that the public masks we had worn to that point could be removed, thus raising the possibility that we could relate to each other on deeper, more authentic levels.

Lee's comments made public what was by then commonly understood: that the united front of pseudocommunity was a façade and that if we were going to continue, we would have to build our community on a different foundation. Lee's comment initiated formally the process of naming differences in the group: differences between subject matter departments, between new and old teachers, between regular department members and department chairs, between building veterans and newcomers, and between those who talked and those who did not. With these differences placed in the public space, it was only a matter of time before the discussion turned to the *essential tension*.[11] Olivia, the ESL teacher, publicly declared that although she would not be able to use curriculum materials the group might produce (because of the limited English skills of her students), she still believed that "the energy that comes out of these meetings—even when we come and disagree all day" sent her back to the classroom "with so much more energy and inspiration."

At this remark, Lee rejoined the conversation by comparing the value of generating curriculum materials versus that of reading texts. His own views on the matter were unambiguous:

> For some of us, maybe *all* of us, there is a sense we want to see improvements in the educational system, and we see [this project] as a vehicle to improve curriculum and instruction . . . For me the "community of learners" is fine, but, on the other hand, I think I am more interested in doing something that might improve the kinds of things that happen in schools.

Lee characterized the divide in the group as one between the desire to read books ("the community of learners") and the desire to write curriculum. Lee's beliefs about the moral differences between these two foci were also clear. On one side were teachers interested in school change and improving the lot of students; on the other side were those who came to the project because they liked to read, an activity that, by implication, had less to do with students and more to do with personal development. With all the work to be done in schools, personal development seemed a luxury at best, an indulgence at worst. Despite our attempts to persuade the group that these two elements of the project could be fruitfully combined, we found ourselves swimming upstream in an institutional and vocational culture stronger than any exhortation we could muster.

Two comments during this discussion capture the depth of the divide that separated opposing forces. Grace, a social studies teacher with seven years experience, spoke with deep conviction about her disappointment:

> I guess I totally had a misconception about what . . . we were going to do here. I thought we were going to get in here and roll our sleeves up and try to integrate language arts and social studies departments as far as curriculum . . . to me that's exciting to develop something . . . we can use. I'm very product driven . . . I am goal-oriented, that's just my nature. It seems to me that with all the stuff I have to do, reading a book like this [holding up and waving her copy of *The Sweeter the Juice*, the first book for discussion at the summer institute] is like *torture* to me. I don't get into it, I'm sorry. I don't . . . This abstract stuff is *killing* me . . . It's like, *what do I need this for?* How am I going to put this into my world history class?

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11 We note that the term "essential tension" is our term for understanding these differences, not the one used by teachers. Teachers referred to the same tension as differences between the "curriculum group" and the "reading group" or between the "curriculum group" and the "community of learners."

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Grace's comment was answered by Dave, who threw down the gauntlet in arguing for the contrary position. Dave, the English teacher who had left the group several months earlier, was persuaded by his English colleagues to return for the summer institute. He left no doubt about his disdain for writing curriculum:[12]

> Grace had a good idea — I think we ought to go around and say what we are afraid of. I am afraid [*irritatedly*] of *being bored*. I just *won't* do it [*with voice rising*]. I will run from it every chance I can. And curriculum development sounds *really* boring. But talking about texts, and listening to different perspectives about books I haven't read, *that* sounds very interesting, and it can't help but make me a better teacher.

These two comments capture the *essential tension of professional development* in terms more vivid than any we could ever invent. It is easy to demonize Grace's comment that "reading is torture" and be shocked at these words from someone who teaches students to navigate the world of written texts. But this would be unfair. Grace's lament speaks to the occupational reality of teaching in which, despite outward support for notions of life-long learning, there is no time to read when the goal of that reading is not immediately apparent. Dave's ability to mine his own experience and education, to turn book discussions into concrete ideas for teaching, was far too abstract for Grace. Moreover, the differences between these two teachers go beyond years of experience. Dave and Grace came to the project with different intellectual backgrounds. Dave was an English major and avid reader, whose education was shaped by the culture and ethos of the seminar. For him, reading books in a circle with other adults was deeply familiar. For Grace, who majored in education at a large state university, the atmosphere of the intimate seminar was foreign and uncomfortable. Nothing in her experience prepared her for the loosely structured give-and-take of the book club.

Despite the territorial divide staked out by Grace and Dave, at least one teacher offered a way to negotiate the essential tension, a way that reading books might connect to her daily work as teacher. Kathy, a second-year English teacher, made this admission to the group:

> I had a feeling of frustration as I was reading *The Sweeter the Juice* and thinking, "Well how is this going to fit into my curriculum?" But as I was thinking about it I realized that I had forgotten how to read for pleasure. We live by the bell, 15 minutes to do this, a half-hour to do that. I don't have time to do this *pleasure reading thing* . . . But what I am realizing is that I need to build this reading into my life. *The Sweeter the Juice* was a great start because I started to think about things I haven't thought about in a long time. And I realized, "You know what—you need to read just to read. You tell your kids to do that, and you are not even doing it yourself."

It was on this reflective note that the group turned to its afternoon activity, a discussion of Shirley Haizlip's memoir, *The Sweeter the Juice*.

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12 Dave's return to the group is a fascinating story in itself, pointing to the complexity of both the process we were engaged in and the nature of the story we are trying to tell. Despite on-going tension in the group, there was still an excitement (as Olivia's comment above attests) about reading books, arguing about texts, and engaging in discussions about literature and history. Dave, a voracious reader who was already a member of several reading groups, was convinced by Barb, a fellow English teacher and a personal friend, that he was "missing out" on something interesting. After a two-month hiatus, Dave rejoined the group. Over the three-year history of the grant, the boundaries of the group remained permeable, with several members coming and going, students interns finishing their internship and being replaced by new ones, and new teachers to the school joining the group. The size of the group ranged between 22-26 teachers at any given time.

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The Cultures of Teacher Community

Researchers often implicitly treat professional community as generic, but the nature of teacher community differs—just as teaching does—by grade level, by subject matter, and by student population. A model of community developed for one population of teachers may not work for others. In community as in clothing, one size does not fit all.

The most developed models of teacher community originated in elementary mathematics (Carpenter, Fennema, & Franke, 1996; Wilson & Berne, 1999; Schifter, 1996). Many of these models have mediated the essential tension between adult learning and student learning by having teachers learn (or re-learn) the elementary school curriculum. At the core of this kind of teacher community is the assumption that teachers cannot teach concepts they themselves have never mastered. Adult learning in such projects is defined by learning the workings of fractions or understanding the meaning behind algorithms for elementary school arithmetic. Elementary teachers are not assumed to possess extensive mathematical knowledge. In addition, part of the reason for the community is to mitigate the negative affect many teachers have around difficult subject matter (Schifter, 1996).

The limitations of such models become apparent when we consider the needs of a group of secondary teachers. Such a group may include teachers with advanced degrees in their subjects and who have chosen to teach a particular subject because of their own passion for it.[13] Such a group differs fundamentally from the prototypical elementary teacher, anxious about her own mathematical understanding and solving math problems with other teachers in a group. By relying primarily on the research on teacher community in elementary math, we risk the same kind of simplifications that came to characterize research on teaching in the 70s. Just as the findings of process-product research, conducted almost exclusively in math and reading classes, were eventually generalized to all teaching, so claims about professional community based largely on elementary math programs might be equally problematic. We need to examine carefully the differences, as well as the similarities, between communities of elementary teachers and those comprising high school teachers.

One key difference between elementary and secondary teachers lies in the assumption of subject matter knowledge. Few elementary teachers are expected to be experts in all of the subjects they teach; most will profess a proclivity for certain aspects of the curriculum and not others. However, secondary teachers are defined, in part, by the subjects they teach. Subject matter provides an important part of their professional identities as teachers (Siskin & Little, 1995). The assumption that teachers do not possess adequate content knowledge might offend many secondary school teachers, whose identities are invested in their subject matter expertise.

Teacher communities differ as well with regard to subject matter. If subject matters operate as distinct subcultures (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995; Siskin & Little, 1995), then it is not surprising to find that norms within subject matters differ as well. We argue that the sociocultural norms of the humanities differ in important ways from those in mathematics. These norms may have important consequences for the kind of discourse that is expected of a community.

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13 For example, in our own group one teacher was ABD in history, another was in the midst of writing a thesis in Russian history, and two members of the English department held MAs in their subject.

Lampert (1990) suggests that mathematical discourse involves arguing about what is true after people have agreed on a common set of axioms. While individuals can argue for different ways of making sense of a problem and for using inventive heuristics to solve it, the ultimate goal in mathematics is convergence. There may be many roads to an answer, but participants who elect different routes expect to arrive at the same destination. Parsimony is another virtue of mathematical culture. Of the many routes to a solution, the simplest route is often seen as the most virtuous and the most "elegant."

The humanities, in contrast, cannot seem to agree on common axioms. Scholars do not agree on what constitutes a text, or how to read a text, or how to do history, or even how history differs from fiction (cf. Friedlander, 1992). Discussions are characterized not by convergence, but by seemingly endless divergence. Nor is this a sign of something gone awry. A humanities discussion that converged on a single interpretation would not be regarded as successful but would lead to the conclusion that either the text was weak or the discussion poor. The richest texts yield multiple competing interpretations. Scholars' readings of Hamlet have yielded more ways of interpreting *Hamlet* than Horatio could have imagined. Given the proliferation of interpretive communities, parsimony is hardly a virtue in a humanities discussion, although elegant expression is.

Yet another way in which the sociocultural norms of the humanities differ is with regard to issues of the self. Math can certainly evoke emotion. In fact, teachers' negative affect about mathematics is part of the problem professional community seeks to solve. But the actual content does not necessarily invoke parts of the self in the same way as in the humanities. In the humanities, the very subject matter addresses what it means to be human; our selves and our own humanity form the core of the subject. To read Toni Morrison's *Beloved* or Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* and not question our own capacity for evil is to excise the human from the humanities. Affect in the humanities is not byproduct but essence (Wineburg & Grossman, in press-c). The issue is not so much our competence (as it may be in mathematics) as it is our very capacities as human beings.[14]

The humanities also engage deep issues of identity. Discussions of history or literature inevitably position us by gender, race, religion, class, geography, and generation—what Huntington (1993) has identified as the "fault lines" of contemporary society. These fault lines identify the predictable lines along which people may differ. Any group of public school teachers represents a microcosm of the larger society.[15] As we grapple with basic issues in the humanities, these differences in our own backgrounds and perspectives predictably emerge. If we see the humanities as fundamentally about understanding what it means to be human, and if race, class, gender, religion, politics, and geography contribute to our identities, then there is no way to avoid these fault lines in any serious discussion. The task becomes how to navigate these fault lines productively.

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14 We recognize that at the highest levels of mathematics, particularly as represented in writings of Lakatos and others, mathematics can be viewed differently. But our point here is not about mathematics and history/English in their most rarefied forms, but rather in the ways these subjects coalesce around communities of practice in high schools and universities. So, for example, undergraduate classes in the humanities (cf. Denby, 1996) often seek to engage the self as their *core* mission. At the same time, we would be quite startled to see the "engagement of self" listed as the central aim of an undergraduate course in mathematics or engineering. A similar statement listed on a syllabus in the humanities would raise few eyebrows and even be considered mundane.

15 The make-up of our group was predominantly White and native to the Pacific Northwest. The group also included an African-American woman and a woman of Native American descent, both of whom were also from the Pacific Northwest. There was a fairly even breakdown along gender lines throughout the first 18 months of the project. Among the group were several evangelical Christians, a practicing Catholic, and several Jews, including the two project leaders. The overwhelming majority of the group identified themselves as liberal democrats but there were also several politically conservative group members.

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Telling Our Stories: Bringing Our Selves to the Table

Following the morning's treatment of interactional norms, we began our first summer institute by discussing Shirley Haizlip's memoir, *The Sweeter the Juice*. Unlike the short texts used in our initial meetings, this full-length book was chosen by a steering committee of five teachers and the two project directors. The decision to read this book originally came up during discussions in the curriculum development groups. One group had selected identity as its organizing theme and suggested that Haizlip's memoir of racial identity would be a promising text for us to read.

This discussion began more smoothly than previous ones. Talk alternated between personal evaluations of the book and comments about how students might react to it, a discursive seesaw that evoked the essential tension of our work. An English teacher began: "I think students would have a difficult time with this book," to which another responded that "the whole idea about how people perceive themselves and how important that is to them, versus what you think of yourself and is important to you . . . would be an interesting discussion piece."

After several minutes, the discussion turned from students to teachers, as individuals began to tell stories of how their own backgrounds helped or hindered their connection to Shirley Haizlip's life. Alice told of her efforts to befriend an African-American woman and the ways in which class, more than race, divided them. Patricia revealed her surprise that she and Haizlip shared so much in common despite racial differences: "She and I had the same experience growing up except that we were a few years apart . . . it was just small town New England middle class family and all the kinds of things you did." Helen shared memories of attending pow-wows with her Native American mother, and how she herself felt excluded because of her own fair skin color. In the first half of this discussion, eight of the twenty two participants located themselves along the fault lines of class, race, religion, ethnicity, or geography.[16]

In telling these stories, people publicly marked their identities. As the discussion unfolded, it became clear that we were far from the homogeneous set of readers of previous meetings. Our reactions to the book reflected our own mixed identities. Patricia expanded on her earlier point:

> I was surprised at how similar Haizlip's was to my own life. From having been raised and having grown up in a town that had no Blacks, we didn't have anything except Whites and Indians . . . To find that a family living as a Black family was so similar to my White family and all my White friends was kind of an interesting surprise to me. And I don't know that I consciously thought there'd be a lot of differences, but I was aware that I was surprised at the similarities.

Even as individuals revealed themselves to their colleagues, the group continued to test the boundaries of legitimate discussion and how to talk about charged topics like race. With the morning's exchange about norms still fresh, teachers tried hard to listen attentively to each other and not to hurt each other's feelings. As Alice fumbled in telling the story of her African-American friend, she added, "I hope I'm saying things politically correct, I might make some mistakes here," a qualification that signaled both the difficulty of talking about race as well as Alice's hope that the group would give her the benefit of the doubt.

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16 During the first half of this discussion there were eight instances of participants identifying themselves to the group along the fault lines of class, ethnicity, race, geography, and religion. Examples (in addition to those of Patricia and Helen) included Ed, a white man, who reflected that "the church was very important, the church events were the most important, but coming back home we didn't practice in the way you might picture a family practicing," or Grace, a woman of a mixed ethnic heritage, who noted, "I'm Caucasian obviously, but not quite obviously, [since] my dad's Armenian, so I could go either way."

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Despite the morning's efforts, conflict quickly erupted. It happened when Alice turned the discussion from Shirley Haizlip's relationship to her mother to the more general issue of racism.

(83) Alice: _____↑I have a question. When the two people drown at the church picnic, and her comment afterward was that it took her many years to realize that the reason this had happened is because that these people were poor, because they were Black, and the kinds of opportunities for taking swimming lessons and so forth were not open to them and shortly after that her father managed to integrate the- -the YMCA. Um, ↑I've heard, you know, a statistic, for example, like 1000 babies die in Harlem every year, a 1000 new-born infants because of- — inaccessibility to health care, and this is considered institutionalized racism. And, the reason these children drowned was considered institutionalized racism. And, are we ↑still? I don't want to say, are we still accepting that as an excuse, that isn't what I mean. But are we ↑still thinking in those terms? Are we ↑still - - -saying - making allowances for all kinds of acts or deeds that might be negative because of institutionalized racism and how do————African Americans? Minorities?

(87) Patricia: [It still exists] ((firmly))[It still exists Alice.

(88) Alice: Well, I-I'm- -I know that.

(89) Patricia: Okay.

(90) Alice: I'm aware of that. But at the same time, on an individual one to one level, when you are dealing with kids, students, or other pupils, do you want to,— - ↓I don't know ((exhale)). Is *that* to be emphasized? Is that what you?

(91) Lee: Well, it depends on what you're talking about. I mean if you are talking about, in what- in what context?- - - -I mean why would?

(92) Alice: ↑I don't know, something as simple as school tardiness!

(93) Lee: Is that institutionalized racism?

(94) Alice: Yeah.

(95) Lee: Some people might say that the tardy policy is- -because some people have a different sense of time. - - - -But,-why would you discuss that? I don't-I- that's where I'm trying to figure out what you're talking about.

(96) Alice: [↑Well, I- I guess I shouldn't. ((angrily)) Should I? I shouldn't have brought it up

(97) Ed: [I think it's good we're discussing this book.

The sharpness of this exchange exposed the fragility of the newly-established group norms. But the larger group did not address this breach. In fact, immediately after Alice's angry retort, Ed, an affable history teacher, tried to put a positive spin on the exchange. "I think it's good that we're discussing this book," he reassured the group, and moved to bring the discussion back to how the book might be used with students. The long silences that followed revealed the fractures in the agreed-upon norms from the morning.

This discussion also uncovered divergent ways of approaching a literary text. At one point Steven Zales, chair of the history department, asked the group, "Is there a way in which Haizlip could bring these pieces of identity together so that she is comfortable with her identity?" Barb, an experienced English teacher, responded by commenting on the differences between fiction and memoir as genres.

> The way it happens is it's fiction . . . The next step for her is she's gonna have to start writing stories and novels. She's gonna have to tell it a different way . . . you can piece it together in fiction, but when it's memoir, it's just baggage.

Barb's point, picked up by no one, was essentially a literary reading of the text that pointed to the possibilities and constraints characteristic of different genres. But Steven took the discussion elsewhere:

> What this story shows once again is the truth of Degler's observation of American and Brazilian society.[17] That in Brazilian society after slavery when abolition came, there existed what he calls a "mulatto escape hatch" so that fair-skinned descendants of slaves became upwardly mobile and enjoyed the multiple benefits of class. In America that did not exist . . . So it seems to me that the author, in her quest to try to resolve these issues of identity, is constantly running into the fact that race continues to matter in the United States.

Steven's reading was informed by history, not literature. He saw the memoir as proof of racism's historical legacy. The distinctively different ways of reading implicit in Steven and Barb's comments foreshadowed yet another major conflict that was to surface among us: the fault line of subject matter.

Subject Matter Fault Lines

At the heart of the curriculum reform movement is the claim that existing subject matter divisions contribute to the fragmentation of the school day for students and teachers alike. This belief has led to the growth of interdisciplinary curricula, which by some estimates has affected nearly two-thirds of all American schools (Cawelti, 1994; Wineburg & Grossman, in press).

The move to integrate curriculum has been easier among some subjects than others, and one of the most common pairings is English and history. Both disciplines are rooted in the study of text and both draw on common narrative forms. Beyond these similarities, the different foci of these disciplines can mutually enhance one another. The study of literature in a history class brings to light cultural aspects of social life often lost in straight presentations of diplomatic and political history. Similarly, the study of history in English classes can situate literary works in time and illuminate aspects of context that render otherwise obscure references understandable.

Indeed, the commingling of literary and historical approaches can be seen in contemporary trends in the academy, such as Simon Schama's *Dead Certainties*, a work by a prominent historian (author of the acclaimed *Citizens*) that blurs historical and fictional genres. In the same vein, novelist Tim O'Brien's *In the Lake of the Woods* is a piece of fiction that employs historical footnotes (some of them fictional) as backdrop to its narrative about Vietnam atrocities. Perhaps the apex of blurred genres is *Dutch*, the recent biography of Ronald Reagan by Pulitzer-prize winning biographer Edmund Morris, which employs the technique of fictional narrator who accompanies Reagan throughout his life.

It is precisely the outcry over *Dutch* from historians (see Masur, 1999; cf. Ozick, 1999, Wineburg, in press) that reveals the enduring fault lines between history and literature. The unarticulated assumption (unarticulated because it is so taken for granted) between historian and reader is that the historical story (no matter how suspense-filled or written with literary flourish) is a *true* story. The notion that the historical story is tethered to something real, something that can be verified using evidence, is, as Harvard historian Oscar Handlin (1979) put it, the historian's "operational article of faith." In the face of postmodern assaults, such a belief, wrote historian Gordon Wood, "may be philosophically naive, may even be philosophically absurd in the skeptical and relativist-minded age; nevertheless it is what makes history writing possible. Historians who cut loose from this faith do so at the peril of their discipline" (1982, p. 59).

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17 Here Steven refers to Carl Degler's (1986) book comparing slavery in Brazil and the United States.

The outcry over *Dutch* points to the perils about which Gordon Wood warns. This outcry also points to the enduring differences between history and English—differences that might not be revealed during the honeymoon phase of the interdisciplinary marriage but which slowly surface as the relationship matures. Epistemological differences between these two disciplines have sociological analogues in the world of schooling. Recent work on high schools explored differences among teachers of different school subjects (Grossman & Stodolsky, 1995; Siskin & Little, 1995). English teachers, for example, tend to share more common intellectual backgrounds (in general, majoring in English), whereas social studies teachers come from more diverse backgrounds, majoring in a number of different fields. Subject matter departments also differ by gender; English teachers tend to be female, whereas their counterparts in social studies tend to be male. Members of these two groups also differ in how they view the purpose of schooling and the curriculum. English teachers overwhelmingly support "personal growth" as a goal for their efforts with students, while social studies teachers report a range of goals with no single theme unifying their many perspectives. English teachers generally report more autonomy over the content to be taught than teachers of many other subjects. In social studies, however, the ubiquity of the history and geography textbook still demands fidelity to a body of content to be mastered and tested. These differences between English and social studies teachers—some epistemological, some sociological—began to emerge in our readings of texts. These issues soon came to a head.

"Grinding the Same Old Wheat"

To illustrate the tenor of these conflicts, we draw on a group discussion that took place 12 months into the project and 6 months after *The Sweeter the Juice*. Prior to this meeting, a recurrent theme in our meetings had been whether there were genuine differences between history and English. Two of the main actors in these discussions were Charlie, an English teacher with eight years experience, and Lee, a social studies teacher with 20 years. In broad terms, Charlie maintained that all texts are literary because they all "do things with language." To the extent that there were differences between disciplines, Charlie maintained, they were more an issue of social convention than any fundamental difference. Lee, on the other hand, saw irreducible differences between the subject matters, which he often cast dichotomously, with English being concerned with "process" and history with "content." Exchanges between Lee and Charlie became a familiar leitmotif during our first year. When undercurrents of this argument surfaced in discussions, other participants would murmur "here we go again" or "oh, no, grinding the same old wheat."

In individual interviews, teachers characterized the history/English debate as a "personality clash" between two strong-willed, argumentative individuals. But noticeably absent from these comments was an awareness of the epistemological issues that seemed to motivate the disagreement in the first place. To the majority of teachers, the exchanges between Lee and Charlie were diversions from the more important issues of working out the specifics of the marital agreement between English and history.

The theme of disciplinary difference came to a head in a discussion that occurred six months after *The Sweeter the Juice* discussion. Worrying that our proposed focus on students' understanding in the humanities had failed to materialize, we planned an activity in which we shared findings from research on student learning in history (cf. Wineburg, 1991, 1998). We created a set of primary source documents on the Battle of Lexington, along with an historian and a student's readings of these texts. One of the primary documents explored issues of battlefield conduct and military propriety in seventeenth-century

Europe, which helped to explain actions at the Battle of Lexington. This 1703 document, a letter written by Solomon Stoddard, addressed the nature of Indian warfare, which avoided confrontation on an open battlefield in favor of small-scale symbolic acts. Stoddard claimed that wholesale killing of Indians could be interpreted as inhumane ("contrary to Christian practice") only if the Indians waged war as other people. "But they are to be looked upon as thieves and murderers . . . they don't appeare openly in the field to bid us battle, they use those cruelly that fall into their hands. . . . They act like wolves and are to be dealt with as wolves" (Stoddard, in Hirsch, 1988). In historical context, such metaphors dehumanized native peoples and provided a justification for the colonists to burn entire Indian villages to the ground (Hirsch, 1988, cf. Wineburg, 1999).

Following comments about how students might struggle with the language and spelling, Lee observed that the Stoddard letter made an important point about what was considered "natural" in the European mind of the mid-18th century. Lee then asked the group whether Samuel Stoddard's letter was simply a "text," open to any interpretation or whether it constituted a window that helps us see how people in the past construed their social reality. He argued:

> You can't read this [letter] in a vacuum. Are you trying to have kids understand the differences in perceptions of Native Americans by the White people who came over here, or are you just trying to get them to analyze "text"? I mean I think it really depends on what your objective is.

The English teachers who responded to Lee's question, however, focused not on the historical elements of the text but on approaches to teaching students to deal with complex texts. Kathy, a beginning English teacher, commented on the attention she paid to issues of subject/verb agreement in reading complicated texts and wondered aloud if perhaps the text she was planning to teach to her freshman, *The Odyssey*, might itself be too challenging. Barb, her experienced colleague, added some suggestions for how to help students gain a foothold into such texts by using the technique of free association:

> One thing I've done that works really well is I give the kids a poem but you give them it one line at a time. Put the line on the board and say okay, I want you to write as much as you can—stream of consciousness—on that line, any and all—just free associate, any associations that come, words, images, this reminds me of. And you go a line at a time, and it's something like "Nothing Gold Can Stay."

This interaction had many analogues during our first year. Lee's question—What is the relationship of the text to a wider historical context?—was stripped of its distinctive epistemological cast. For Lee, the central question was "How do we read *history*?" but in the very next turn, the question for Kathy and Barb became "How do we teach *reading*?" In the space of a few short minutes, Lee's question boomeranged back refashioned as a recommendation to teach students to read closely by presenting them a text line-by-line and having them "free associate." It was this suggestion—the notion of having students free associate in response to text—that brought Lee to his boiling point.

"I mean, you write a line up on the board—this "Gold" one [referring to the poem Barb had mentioned earlier]—that could mean *anything* you want it to mean," Lee objected, his voice cracking. Leaning forward and shaking the Stoddard letter in his hand, Lee glared at his colleagues, "This one can't!" The baldness of Lee's claim that there is a restricted set of meanings for a historical text served as the signal for Charlie, Lee's sparring partner from English, to enter the fray.

(90) Charlie: ↑I think I could probably break this up into verse and make a poem out of it.

(91) Lee: Well, I'm sure you could, but that doesn't mean that it, that it, that it means, it's as ambiguous as a line of ↓poetry.

(92) Rhonda: It may not be ↑as ambiguous, but I think anytime you're dealing with primary sources you have to take the same things into consideration that you would have to if you were dealing with a literary text.

(93) Charlie: Look! "They act like wolves and are dealt with all as wolves."

(94) Lee: [↑A literary]

(95) Rhonda: [_____act like wolves that are↓]

(96) Nancy: Yeah, that's the exact line. ↑How do wolves act? And how do you deal with that?=

(97) Charlie: [↑That's poetry!

(98) Nancy: =that's the question I had.

(99) Charlie: ↑In fact! I would call that poem--- ((said melodramatically))"They Act Like Wolves"

(100) Nancy: [How would you approach that?]

(101) Kathy: ["Dances With Wolves"]
((chuckles & asides))

(102) Lee: Okay, you call that poem, "They Act Like Wolves" but if you just wrote on your board=

(103) Nancy: [Historically, what would you do with that?

(104) Lee: =if you took this out of context and just wrote on your board: "They *Act* Like Wolves," then we're talking about something completely different. But when you're taking the context of something that's talking about a specific ↑action by a specific group of ↑people, and you know THAT when you give them the assignments!=

(105) Charlie: So did they act like wolves?

(106) Lee: =[then that's ↑different than writing a line of a poem up on a board.

Several turns later, Barb reentered the conversation, this time to reassure Lee that her goals were closer to his than he might think. She addressed him directly:

(169) Barb: Lee, this is the place where-where we ↑meet so, we meet so ↑*completely* in this text as History and LA people. We meet in—in ↑language=

(170) Lee: [Doesn't sound like we're meeting very well.

(171) Barb: =We ↑*are*. ((scattered laughter)) We're meeting in language, and ↑you're talking, Lee, you're talking objectives, and that's nothing to do with what we're talking here. You're talking about language, deciphering language, understanding language.

Barb's comment (line 169) denies even the possibility that there is a difference between history and English. To Barb (171), Charlie (99), and several other English teachers at the table, disciplinary differences merged into a sea of textuality: All texts were polysemeous. Lee, on the other hand, held firmly to the belief that a textual representation did not equal reality, that text is a partial and sometimes impoverished referent, which must be viewed in a larger context before it can be understood (104-106). Without paying attention to factors outside of the text, Lee implied, the process of reading a historical document like the Stoddard letter loses integrity.

The distinctions teachers argued about were made without recourse to explicit disciplinary markers. The entire exchange had a diffuse and scattered ring. When Barb talked about the need to "have a dialogue back and forth with the self and the text," or Dave, another English teacher, claimed that the main imperative of reading was to "pay attention," they did not refer explicitly to traditions of reader response or efferent or aesthetic readings. Nor did Lee refer to the dangers of presentism in reading

historical documents. In fact, the efforts to convince Lee that there was a "way to read," a way that came with a pedagogical strategy of focusing on text and encouraging student response, assumed that strategies for reading in history and literature were interchangeable. When Lee failed to yield, it was not because he drew on disciplinary warrants but because he was, at least in some people's eyes, stubborn. In this sense, disciplinary differences were cast as a personality clash. The discussion ended with deeper entrenchment and an unwillingness by either group to step outside their perspective to understand the other.

We do not deny that personality issues played a part in these and other discussions. Lee, Barb, Charlie, and others were strong-willed, articulate individuals with histories of relating that long predated this project. But we do not believe that these interactions can be explained by personality factors alone. As we listened to these discussions we did not hear them as "grinding the same old wheat," but as beginning to address, however tentatively, contentious issues at the heart of textual disciplines, where scholars argue, debate, and challenge received notions about the relationship between text and reality. Issues of textuality are at the epicenter of the linguistic turn in the humanities, and have spawned an array of conceptual approaches—from postmodernism, to feminist readings, to cultural studies—that have breathed fresh energy into the humanities. The issues of text as representation are problematic in the best sense of the humanities: they jar us out of complacency and ask us to reconsider our beliefs about how we know what (we think) we know.

For these kinds of readings to surface and for people to become aware of different ways to grapple with the written word, a group needs time together. Such time is not taken, nor granted, in the fleeting interactions that typify interdisciplinary marriages of convenience (cf. Hamel, in press; Wineburg & Grossman, in press-a, in press-b). In such marriages, there is a leap toward agreement, in which participants search for what is common between disciplines rather than what is distinct.

But an approach to interdisciplinarity that preserves difference, casting it as a strength rather than a problem, must allow for the articulation of multiple voices. In this case, the "problem" for several English teachers became getting Lee to expand his textual horizons rather than trying to understand, at a deeper level, the points he was making. Instead of agreeing to disagree, a useful way station to higher understanding, this was an act of appropriation, as one discipline sought to subsume another. Nowhere during the 83 minutes of this discussion did anyone ask Lee a follow-up question. Instead, the group assumed that they understood Lee; the goal became to persuade him of his errors. Although outnumbered by English teachers, and unsupported by other social studies teachers, Lee did not back down.

While the conflict in this discussion left teachers unsettled, we saw it as evidence that disciplinary positions were beginning to surface. The relationship between text and the larger social context is a core issue in the humanities; in this discussion we heard the voices of Hayden White or even Stanley Fish, represented by Charlie's position, and Gordon Wood's argument that history forsakes "the truth" at its peril, voiced by Lee. The different ways to engage the same phenomena, at the heart of interdisciplinary efforts, swam just beneath the surface of this discussion. Unlike our earlier discussion of *The Sweeter the Juice*, these issues *were* picked up by the group as a whole. While group members were not yet able to name the differences that divided Lee and Charlie, they did become engaged and invigorated by the debate.

In this discussion, conflict signaled affective engagement. We had clearly moved beyond the stage of pseudocommunity in which we tepidly agreed on "critical reading" as a goal. How to read and teach text was no longer a neutral topic but one that sparked intellectual passion, as Lee and Barb debated the merits of free association and Charlie and Lee wrestled over the "poetry of history." The respective refusals of either side to yield set the stage for further debate. The interaction also clarified the critical importance of having multiple voices at the table, although this diversity of perspectives hardly produced harmonious discussion. Barb's failure to convince Lee to adopt a literary perspective toward text, a move made in part to restore harmony to the group, widened the dispute even more. But in many ways it was this very question—the protean nature of text in the humanities—that ultimately led to new learning later in our project. Without Lee's voice at the table, the debate never would have occurred. The capacity of the group to learn from this argument, to learn to listen more thoughtfully to different ways of engaging and reading text, depended upon both the intellectual and social resources of the community as a whole.

Distribution of Social Intellectual Work in a Community

Teachers' professional community requires that its members engage in both intellectual and social work—new ways of thinking and reasoning collectively as well as new forms of interacting interpersonally. In the context of the traditional high school, there are few opportunities for learning to interact with colleagues outside of abbreviated interchanges. Extended periods of adult-to-adult interaction in the workplace are irregular, episodic, and rare, and run counter to teachers' professional socialization (cf. Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975). When such interactions do occur, they are typically focused on instrumental goals. Few teachers have the experience of spending regular time together as adults, in the context of the workplace, in which they engage each other as learners for longer than a 25-50 minute block.

Learning Together

One of the first lessons to be learned in the development of teacher community is that some people know things that others do not know and the collective's knowledge exceeds that of any individual. Although this may seem self-evident, teachers spend most of their working lives in situations in which they serve as the primary authority and where their knowledge of the subject typically exceeds that of their students. (This is particularly true at the secondary level.) Learning from colleagues requires both a shift in perspective and the ability to listen hard to other adults, especially as these adults struggle to formulate thoughts in response to challenging intellectual content. Schools, and the social forums for adults in them, are conditioned by the dictates of the moment. With teaching's emphasis on doing—and often doing quickly—listening hard to the ill-formed thoughts of another adult is a new activity for teachers that may seem strange and exotic.

The notion that the collective wisdom and knowledge of a group exceeds that of any one individual taps one aspect of the concept of *distributed cognition*, as the idea has been developed in the context of classrooms by the late Ann Brown and her colleagues (cf. Salomon, 1993). In a discussion about a given topic, say the Roosevelt era, one individual may know about the decision to pack the Court, another about attempts to integrate the military, another about issues of social security, and others may have

family members who participated in the WPA or CCC. For the collective to benefit from this distribution, social conditions must exist that allow individuals to share what they know publicly rather than keeping it to themselves.

The example of knowledge about the Roosevelt administration corresponds to how educators have adapted certain techniques developed by social psychologists, such as the "jigsaw" method in classroom settings (Aronson & Goode, 1979; Brown & Campione, 1994). Jigsaw provides a social architecture for carving up knowledge into distinct spheres or "puzzle pieces" that can be reassembled. In the form of jigsaw learning adapted by Brown and her colleagues, students learn about different aspects of a common topic and then pool their learning in small groups or in a whole class setting.

But there is a second form of knowledge distribution particularly relevant to interdisciplinary work: the distribution of fundamentally different *ways of knowing*. Here, what is distributed among individuals are ways of reading, ways of asking questions, ways of adjudicating truth claims and coming to warranted judgments of quality. These *distributed epistemologies* enrich discussion but do not necessarily lead to any higher-order syntheses. Unlike the metaphor of a puzzle, in which pieces fill in a common form or contour, we might think of the metaphor of a kaleidoscope, in which fragmented patterns form and disappear with slight changes in perspective and refraction. The question to ask of an "epistemological jigsaw" is not how the pieces fit together but how do the different positions make the discussion more textured and complex (cf. Denby, 1996). The goal in this exercise is not to solve a pre-existing puzzle but to deconstruct pedestrian and self-satisfied notions of form and content.

A good discussion in the humanities thus requires both kinds of intellectual diversity among members—individuals who bring different knowledge pieces (literary knowledge of Shakespearean drama, personal experience touring the Globe Theater, knowledge of dramatic production in Elizabethan times, etc.) as well as individuals who bring different ways of reading Shakespeare, from close readings in an *explication de téxte* tradition, to feminist critiques, to personal responses.[18] For a community to learn from each other, we would want both kinds of intellectual resources represented.

But there is another aspect to consider in a community of teacher-readers. Within *professional* community, the collective learning of the group is necessary but not sufficient. In the existing social structure of schooling, teachers return to their respective classrooms individually, not collectively. Given the present reality of schooling and the likelihood that it will persist into the foreseeable future, the collective must serve as a training ground for individuals to think in new ways, to learn to listen for and try out new ways of knowing and reading. In other words, in the supportive context of the teacher reading group, teachers who bring a reader-response orientation to text must also learn that there are alternative ways of reading—ways that privilege a text's historical context or that locate the text within an intertextual tradition. Teachers need to possess a supple understanding of the different intellectual roles played by their peers before they can identify the proto-forms of these voices—often more subtle and difficult to discern—in the comments of their students.

From this perspective, it is not enough for teachers to enact the same intellectual role in the group over and over—to give only an aesthetic reading to a literary work or to ignore questions of social

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18 We draw here on notions of reading in the humanities based on the work of Robert Scholes (1985, 1989).

history and representation. Over time we would want teachers to develop sufficient understanding of the different perspectives represented in the group so that they would be able to try on these perspectives themselves. This is precisely what happens in successful reading groups, in which individuals begin to interiorize the voices of group members and report "hearing" each other's voices as they read books in the solitude of their own homes. Without the movement from *distributed cognition* (in which individuals bring different aspects of content to a group and share these collectively) to *cognition distributed* (in which there is a rotation and redistribution of epistemological roles) teachers may not be able to identify and thus recreate multiple ways of reading and knowing in their respective classrooms. Teacher professional community cannot be solely fixated on the content of its own collective learning without seeing the social group as the crucible for individual change.[19]

The ability to alternate roles within the social group of supportive peers does not, of course, guarantee that one can or will do so with students. But we can say that if teachers are not able to discern differences between their familiar ways of reading and the radically different and well-articulated perspectives of peers, it is unlikely that they will be able to recognize and engage the inchoate forms of these ways of knowing among their students.

Navigating a River . . . and Ourselves

Two months after the discussion on the Stoddard letter and 14 months into the project, we met to discuss *The Organic Machine* by MacArthur prize winning author Richard White, a professor of history at the University of Washington. *The Organic Machine* narrates the story of the Columbia River, the waterway that has played a pivotal role in the settlement and development of the Pacific Northwest. Unlike conventional histories, organized around major events and key personalities, the protagonist of this story is the Columbia itself, a narrative strategy that defines the field of environmental history White pioneered. White's recruitment of literary technique and evocative language provided a rich opportunity to engage questions at the heart of the interdisciplinary enterprise, particularly issues of narrativity that straddle the boundaries between history and fiction.

Indeed, it was the literary quality of *The Organic Machine* that sparked the initial discussion, as participants weighed in about White's use of metaphor. Shortly thereafter, the discussion flowed from the story of a river to a river of stories. Participants moved from White's narrative to a description of how their *own* lives mingled with the landscape, economy, and development of the Columbia. Teachers who had said little in group meetings to that point moved to the center. Frank Ingram, the social studies teacher who had been silenced earlier on, embarked on his longest single turn in 8 months, when he compared the Columbia to the rivers of his childhood in Michigan.[20] Ed described growing up on the banks of the Columbia and the tensions between gill-netters and sport fishermen. Mary described going

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19 Here the contrastive foci of situative and cognitive approaches to social learning sharpen the issue for professional community. As Salomon and Perkins (1998) note, situative approaches conceptualize learning holistically and the "hoped-for transfer is to other similar activity systems" (p. 10). In this respect a teacher community around books might transfer to other contexts in which adults come together to read—in a church setting, or even in social settings in the home. But in the cognitive approach, the focus is on how the social context equips the learner with new capacities, new ways of seeing, hearing, listening that serve the learner in other contexts (cf. Damon, 1991). Here the classroom represents a dramatically different context from a collegial forum.

20 Frank Ingram's long turn here totaled 507 words, which was considerably longer than any other single turn he took in previous discussions. For example, prior to the discussion of *The Organic Machine*, Frank's longest single turn in any meeting was 146 words. Frank's usual participation consisted of short (20 words or less) responses to his colleagues, a fact that underscores the difference in his participation here.

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down the river with her grandmother, whose 91 years spanned many of the changes White described. Like the discussion of *The Sweeter the Juice*, the discussion of *The Organic Machine* provided a springboard to self-disclosure, an opportunity to explain who we are and where we came from.

The surging currents and the tranquil tributaries of the Columbia served still another function. The river gave us a metaphor for our own development as a group. Several people spontaneously compared the history of the Columbia to our own unpredictable course of coming together, creating curriculum, and learning to read books. The effect of such comparisons was to mark, with an explicitness unknown to this point, the emerging sense of group memory, the constitutive narrative that weaves individuals into an "us." When Lee made a provocative comment that would have derailed us in earlier meetings, Rhonda, Lee's student teacher,[21] offered a meta-commentary on group process: "The great thing about Lee is that up to now [we've] all been sort of making our own individual comments. Now Lee jumps in," Rhonda joked, "and now we're *all* going to have to respond and jump on top of him!" In making explicit the conversational patterns that polarized earlier meetings, Rhonda's light touch diffused a potential explosion. More important, it held a mirror to the group that allowed it to ponder its collective image, its familiar roles, and its well-worn exchanges. The effect of making these patterns explicit was to release the group from having to go down the same well-beaten path. The next turn cycled back to the topic that had been discussed prior to Lee's comment.

Rhonda was not the only person to act as the group's linguistic monitor. In contrast to the first meetings, we said little, except for some initial framing at the discussion's start and end.[22] When conflict again threatened to erupt over the charged question of technological "progress," Grace assumed the role of discussion broker:

> You guys, wrong reasons or right reasons, remember we all have opinions here and some of us may not think some things are wrong or right. Let's be careful of value judgments here.

Typically uncertain and often self-deprecating, Grace tried on a leadership role for the first time in over 14 months of meetings.

Like the eddies of a river, members' stories coursed in different directions. At one point Dave wondered aloud, "I've got a question for somebody and you can tell me during the break, I've always been curious, how do you build a dam?" Dave's question sparked an interchange among five participants who collectively constructed an answer to Dave's question about dam building.[23]

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21 Student teachers came to play an important role in this project. Viewed simultaneously as both insiders and outsiders to the school, they straddled the worlds of university and school. Rhonda, in particular, stood out in her capacity to function as a broker between the two sites of school and university. For instance, she was able to successfully introduce several professional education texts to the group (see #22 & #24) something we refrained from doing after the difficulty surrounding Scholes' work in the second month of the project. In Goffman's terms Rhonda had a certain type of permission or authenticity needed to perform this role that came from working as a student teacher at the school. In this sense, we see her akin to the liminal role of "insider – outsider" described by Victor Turner which provided her and the other student teachers with opportunities to do things we couldn't. We take up the role of the student teachers at the end of the paper.

22 For example, in the discussion of *The Sweeter the Juice* we accounted for all of the structuring comments that framed the discussion; here, our structuring comments dropped to 3 comments total, a 150% decrease.

23 As the following excerpt from the discussion shows, this conversation about the construction of a dam was dominated by male participants. We have identified several other places in group discussions where gender divisions were noticeable, but we are saving this analysis for a separate paper.

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Table 1. Discussion of *The Organic Machine*, April 1996

(245) Dave: I've got a question for somebody and you can tell me during the break. I've always been curious, how do you build a dam? So, if you don't want talk about it in here
(246) Rhonda: [↑oh, I was wondering that too
(247) Dave: ↑I don't know how to build, how a dam gets built, I would really like to know, boy I would — so if you know, yea, I'd like you to tell me.

(251) Guy: …in terms of how they channel the water around
(252) Dave: ↑They actually do? ↓They divert it around.
(253) Mary: Yea. they showed some early films
(254) Quentin: [They built two dams, they built the coffer dam
(255) Dave: [how do you divert the river though?
(256) Quentin: the coffer dam!—a temporary dam that diverts the water from that area while they get that built
(257) Dave: Okay, okay, okay, but I've, you know, I've been around this river a lot and it's a big ass river and ((group laughter)) ↑I know he used to talk about a lot of wood here but, you know, it's the size of a national forest ↓that's going to go into this wood lock but where, where do you start? Do you take pile drivers out above, upstream of where you're gonna, your gonna go and you, you pound in, what do you do? Do they pour concrete in?
(258) Quentin: [Well, when they build the coffer dam that's what they do=
(259) Dave: [Well
(260) Quentin: =they're building a dam that is going to divert water. It doesn't change the height of the water it just diverts the water from where they can then go in and, and do some construction.
(261) Dave: So you build it ↑just upstream, and then, so you got the water going around like this ((demonstrating w/hands)) these guys are little beavers are down there chipping their heads off the
(262) Chuck: [Remember where they initially built the dam though was to recreate——an actual geologic feature that previously existed and so they did it in an optimal, what they considered an optimal place.
(263) Dave: ((sarcastically))[Yeah yeah, you don't think the water is part of the river though?
(264) Chuck: Right
(265) Dave: But, but still, okay, so you got, you got a coffer dam—so you got the river diverted and you got blah blah blah and you got something built here ((demonstrating w/hands)) right? And then what do you do?
(266) Frank: Open that area up.
(267) Dave: To what?
(268) Frank: The other side
(269) Dave: Oh, so you got holes in the thing here and then, then=
(270) Frank: [Yea
(271) Dave: =and so you divert it the other way and it goes through the spillways—here ((demonstrating w/hands))
(272) Frank: And then you build the other half
(273) Dave: [and then you build the other half. See, so it's, you go one half and then
(274) Quentin: [you build in your spillways as you build your first piece so now you got a diversionary—funnel that the water fits in
(275) Dave: I see, so if you're a worker you have a lot of faith in the coffer dam ((select laughs))

The previous excerpt (see Table 1) shows one way in which the group pooled individual knowledge to construct a broader understanding. We liken this exchange to the description of jigsaw activities described earlier, in which individuals contribute knowledge pieces to the group's collective understanding. We also see this interchange as evidence of the group's growing capacity and willingness to engage with and learn from each other. Dave, keenly intelligent, headstrong, and incisive in his interpretations, first confesses his ignorance to the group. Compared to our early months, such confessions were unknown, for the group norm was to perform understanding and mask ignorance (what Goffman called "impression management"). As an intellectual leader, Dave's willingness to turn to the group for help was symbolically important. To get his question answered, Dave pressed the group to supply increasingly detailed information about coffer dams and, in the give and take that followed, acted as a midwife to the emerging explanation. A similar episode occurred when teachers jointly told the story of how an entire town disappeared on the banks of the Columbia. In this exchange Lee served in the role of discussion broker, pressing the group for further details.

The Organic Machine constituted an important way station on the road to the group's consciousness of its own "groupness." The discussion elicited the participation of several members who had been spectators and thrust other participants into new roles as discussion brokers and conflict mediators. But for all these positive developments, we were nonetheless concerned with the limited engagement of the intellectual aspects of Richard White's experimental history. For example, early on, Lee expressed frustration with White's writing style, but no one picked up his implicit questions about the portrayal of the river as a living organism. Lee:

> Well, I had a really hard time with his writing style, kind of sing-song style was confusing, driving me crazy after a while . . . I think what [White] wanted us to do was to relate to the river as if it was a living organism and I have a hard time doing that. After all, it's *just* water.

Lee's question was left hanging even though three English teachers commented earlier on their appreciation of White's style. (Alice even went so far as to read aloud a particularly evocative passage.[24]) Although this book afforded the possibility of engaging issues of narrativity, style, and epistemology in historical writing—issues at the center of any genuine interdisciplinary undertaking—they went unexploited and unaddressed in the ensuing discussion.

Indeed, the tone of the discussion was decidedly social, and it was on this note that the discussion ended. As the discussion came to a close, Ed Berry, the affable history teacher mentioned earlier, suggested to the group that they take a field trip to the Columbia River to see firsthand its varied landscape. This playful suggestion provided further evidence of an emerging sense of a collective organized to learn and grow together. Our conversation around the river and our embarking on this figurative field trip required new forms of social and linguistic engagement. It is to this "social work" of community that we now turn.

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24 The passage that Alice read aloud from White (p. 63) is noteworthy in weaving literary and historical elements: "Planning was critical to the river, but plans for the Columbia rarely regarded it an anything more than abstraction, a prime mover providing potential kilowatts . . . Lewis Mumford was not a planner, but he wrote eloquently of planning. It was a difficult task. Planning is an exercise of power, and in a modern state much real power is suffused with boredom. The agents of planning are usually boring; the planning process is boring; the implementation of plans is always boring. In a democracy boredom works for bureaucracies and corporations as smell works for a skunk. It keeps danger away. Power does not have to be exercised behind the scenes. The audience is asleep. The modern world is forged amidst our inattention" (p. 62).

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The Social Work of Community

The construction of community requires ongoing social negotiation, including the regulation of social interactions and group norms. While a few individuals may do most of this regulation at the beginning of the group's history, for a community to form members must begin to take on this responsibility themselves. This requires new forms of participation in leadership. Over time, for example, we would expect more people to take on the work of brokering discussions or of addressing violations of norms rather than that responsibility falling on the shoulders of a single individual or facilitator. From this perspective, we could chart the growth of community by looking at the evolution of its leadership. The degree to which discussion brokering is distributed among individuals, the degree to which it is alternated rather than monopolized by one or two people, is itself one indicator of group equity and maturity.

Communities are microcosms of larger social collectives in that they pivot on the tension between the rights and the responsibilities of membership. For a community to be sustained, members must believe in their right to express themselves honestly, without fear of censure or ridicule. But genuine communities make demands on their members—membership comes tethered with responsibilities. In teacher professional community, a core responsibility is to the learning of other teachers. This responsibility might include making contributions to group discussions, pressing others to clarify their thoughts, engaging in intellectual midwifery for the ideas of others, and providing resources for others' learning. If a feature of pseudocommunity is withdrawal from the public space when conflict erupts, then a feature of a mature community is the willingness to engage in critique in order to further collective understanding.

The work of school-based community demands new forms of social participation. In a profession constructed around norms of privacy, taking responsibility for the learning of other adults is a radical departure from business as usual. Pressing colleagues for clarification in a public setting requires not only a particular intellectual stance, but enormous social skill and negotiation to prevent hurt feelings and shutdown. Learning to argue productively about ideas that cut to the core of personal and professional identity involves the skillful orchestration of multiple social and intellectual capacities.

While this vision of community may seem utopian, we believe that it is exactly the kind of work that teachers require of students if classrooms are to become "communities of learners." The literature of reform-oriented teaching rings with accounts and exhortations of teachers who engage students in risky intellectual and social work: teachers who ask youngsters to state their ideas but also listen hard to others, who ask students to hone their ability to commit to what they think at the same time as avoiding entrenchment; who ask students to focus on their learning while also considering the needs of the group. Yet, we believe that such classroom communities will have little chance of enduring if teachers, as adult professionals in the workplace, do not develop opportunities to engage in similar activities. Schools cannot become exciting places for children until they first become exciting places for adults.

Naming the Differences: Moving Toward Community

Eighteen months into the project and four months after our discussion of *The Organic Machine*, the group gathered for its second summer institute. Our text for the first day was *Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*, by Robert Olen Butler, a text that Mary had suggested in a discussion seven months earlier.

Mary, the experienced special education teacher and a member of our steering group, led off. Referring to a set of guiding questions generated by Dave, Mary suggested that the group adopt a guiding question for the week.[25]

(2) Mary: Well, ↑I—I just have thought a ↑lot since, I guess Dave Collins really brought it up—dramatically last spring, about having, you know, this list of questions that we think about ↓and—um——the impact that they might have on actually *publishing* such questions, and having them be part of one's ↑curriculum throughout the year, or a unit, or whatever. And, so one of the things that I've been doing in thinking about this fall is really addressing that issue, ↑at least for myself and maybe with the people that I'm planning curriculum with. One of the things that I thought about—um—in reading the short stories, was *this* book and *this* question, I hadn't read this book yet, but I thought what would it be like to be able read— this series of short stories with the guiding question being, what it means to be an American? Or, what does it mean to be an American? . . . ↑I wondered if it would be appropriate for ↑this group—to have—a guiding question this week? To experiment with that idea if we think it's important enough to—use in our classrooms-that we might ↓consider —creating guiding questions for ourselves this week. ↓One or two from there. ↓Is that what you were referring to _____?

((15 seconds of silence))

(3) Helen: ↑The questions are section *three* in the notebook. ↓I'm trying to remember what they are.

(4) Grace: I like the idea of reading the book with guiding questions. ↓It was a neat idea. It would give us the ↑practice—or train us—↓does that make sense?

From this first opening comment, changes in the group were evident. First, Sam and Pam were no longer brokering the discussion. Neither the idea to read this text nor the use of guiding questions to structure the discussion came from us. Mary and Helen took on the work of facilitation, with support from others. Their emergence as group leaders was nothing short of remarkable, for both began their tenure in the project feeling like outsiders. Initially on the margins because of her role as a special education teacher, Mary moved to the center; her voice, initially tentative, gained assurance and authority, as people recognized her leadership. Helen began the group as a second year teacher; initially hesitant to join the discussions, in part because she worried about getting "fried" by the more experienced teachers, Helen played a pivotal role in this discussion.

Mary's suggestion to use questions to guide our discussion vividly demonstrated how the group had begun to navigate the essential tension. Here we explicitly agreed to experiment with an approach that we had talked about using in the classroom, using our group as a crucible for the classroom. Throughout the discussion, people continued to make the connections between our own readings of this work and classroom teaching. Later in the discussion, for example, Lee, who had months earlier vehemently resisted the value of eliciting students' personal response, said:

> I was wondering if a good guiding question might not have something to do with connection because I was thinking about, you know, the story about the little girl and, you know, my—my connecting with this is I had been in New Orleans recently was how much the story seemed, that

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25 The guiding questions originated from the end of an all-day meeting when the group was deliberating over how to proceed with the curriculum development part of the project. In response to an article on interdisciplinary curriculum we debated whether it would be a good idea to have a set of questions for each grade level or a set of questions that extended across the grades. At this point, Dave took the floor and informed the group that he used a series of questions to guide inquiry in his English classes. He wrote a list of questions on the board that included; What do we do when we read? What does it mean to write? How are reading and writing acts of composing? What kinds of strategies do we employ in the face of difficulty? Rhonda, one of the student teachers, recognized several of the questions as similar to those presented in *The Power of Their Ideas* by Deborah Meier (1995). She then brought the book to the following meeting at which time the group began to explore the habits of mind articulated in the book. The group eventually came up with its own set of guiding questions which several teachers posted on the walls of their classrooms.

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his portrayal of New Orleans seemed real, and it did. So I think there's something where we connect with literature. You know, that to me would be a guiding question, where is there a connection? And how do we get to that connection for our students?

Lee's question represents a fundamental shift in his participation. Often seen as a provocateur or resident cynic, here Lee builds on the ideas of his colleagues. Rather than throwing a monkey wrench into this intellectual construction, he assumes the role here of intellectual laborer, asking questions that build on the foundations of the discussion. Lee's question is significant for a second reason. Early on, Lee had criticized the "touchy-feely" aspects of language arts; here he asked a genuine question about how teachers can help students make connections to literature, a pedagogical move he earlier rejected. We see Lee's role throughout this discussion as profoundly altered. His use of the collective pronoun, "we," to talk about teaching cast his lot with the group and represented a marked departure from his earlier oppositional stance. Indeed, the sense of collective membership manifested in how members referred to themselves in this discussion, and relative to earlier ones, the change was profound. In this discussion 22 percent of all discussion turns contained a reference to the group as a "we," "us," or "our" compared to only five percent of turns a year earlier in *The Sweeter the Juice*, an increase of 325 percent!

One of the guiding questions proposed for the group came from Rhonda, a student teacher. She reported that her small group had discussed whether Butler's stories are valid given that the author is a white male speaking in a Vietnamese voice and whether "authors of fiction have responsibility for giving us something that is absolutely true and accurate." This question cut to the epistemological core of literature and to questions of validity and voice that had resided below the surface of many of the group's arguments. Immediately, Alice jumped in.

(34) Alice: ↓Lee had some things to say about that.

(35) Lee (quietly): ↓What's that mean?

(36) Alice I just volunteered you to address yourself to Rhonda's comment about the validity—and his voice.

(37) Lee: ↑Yeah, I mean, I just thought that—why is the expectation of validity different in this case than in any other fictional work? And if that is the major question why did we read the book?

This short exchange illustrates the movement from pseudocommunity toward community. In community, ideas are public property, their pursuit a communal responsibility. Group members can be held accountable for contributing their individual insights to the larger group. In this interaction, Alice asked Lee to ante up, and just as importantly, he complied. His questions about the nature of validity in fiction became the centerpiece for an extended debate about the nature of "truth" in literature.

We see another example of holding individuals accountable for their contributions later in the discussion. In attempting to define a guiding question that builds upon Lee's idea, Helen suggested adopting the question, first generated by Dave, "How important is the truth in what we teach?" In response Quentin, an experienced English teacher, volunteered that "fiction is truth-plus" and "the curiosity piece is always to ask, what part is true? What part is plus?" Quentin's enigmatic comment was not left unscrutinized. Olivia pressed him to explain.

(82) Olivia: What part is what?

(83) Quentin: What part is true part? What part is plus? And—and I think your concern

(84) Olivia: [How? What? How do you separate the two? I don't understand.

(85) Quentin: I don't know.

(86) Alice: Truth and what's added to truth. Is that what you're saying?

(87) Quentin: I think

(88) Olivia: [↑Isn't the whole piece truth from one person's point of view? This is Butler's truth about whatever he's telling the truth about . . . .

Here again, Quentin was held accountable for an off-handed and opaque comment. Olivia's desire to understand Quentin's point and what it might add to the discussion led to an intense but respectful exchange, in which Olivia, and then Alice, pushed for definition and elaboration. This interchange suggests the opposite of what might be called a *poker model* of discourse, in which individuals throw ideas, much like poker chips, into the center, where they lay inert, untouched by discussion. Here, Quentin's chip is picked up, examined, and discussed before the discussion moves on. In this alternative model, group members have responsibilities as participants—listeners have the responsibility to admit their own confusion in understanding others, and speakers have the responsibility to clarify their initial ideas. This exchange more closely resembles a game of bridge, in which partners try to understand each other's bids and build upon their understanding of their partner's strengths in order to determine the best possible strategy.

This exchange underscores as well the communal nature of understanding in an intellectual community. Olivia's understanding is not a private matter to be addressed with Quentin privately over coffee. Instead, her expression of confusion is a gift to the collective, as it provides opportunities for everyone to benefit from Quentin's efforts at clarification. Throughout this discussion, people take up others' points, press for clarification, and revoice what they have heard in an effort to understand the issues raised.

We see these interactions as forms of *intellectual midwifery*, in which the group assists in the birth of new ideas. For such births to occur, the group must provide a safe environment in which individuals are free to voice uncertainty, explore ideas, state and retract opinions. Part of the press for clarification must therefore affirm the potential value of a speaker's contribution. During this discussion, several participants responded to a speaker saying, "I fully agree with you but . . . ." or "I share with you your concern, but . . . ."[26] We see these as linguistic markers of an effort that both affirms a prior speaker's perspective but at the same time pushes the idea further. Such turns of phrase acknowledge mutuality while also asserting difference. The initial expression of agreement lessens the sting of having an idea challenged in a public forum. It is a linguistic form of Steven Carter's "etiquette of democracy."

The discussion of *Good Scent from a Strange Mountain* exemplified the group's commitment to its own learning by asking individual members to make private contributions public, and pressing them on their ideas. Group members also demonstrated this commitment through their actions. Building on a practice that Nancy had begun, Charlie and Olivia both brought written reviews of *Good Scent from a Strange Mountain* to the group meeting. When the group debated how Vietnamese might view this book,

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26 This was a general trend that went beyond an isolated instance. For example, Lee expressed dissent differently than he had in earlier meetings. Here he began by acknowledging that he has heard a point made by Charlie, his sparring partner from the Stoddard discussion, with the phrase, "I understand that" before he went on to press for further clarification. In this same discussion we hear Olivia responding to Grace by starting her comment with the introduction, "I fully agree with you but . . . ." Only after this affirmation did Olivia go on to press Grace to consider the broader implications of her comments. In a response to Olivia, Charlie opened with "I share your concern, but..." Throughout this discussion, group members continually pressed each other for clarification and disagreed with each other in more civil and constructive ways as evidenced by these microfeatures of discourse. Such microfeatures, crucial but often overlooked, contributed to what we think of as an *invitational* conversational climate.

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Charlie offered to ask his Vietnamese-American neighbor who had read the book if she would be willing to engage in a public e-mail conversation. Olivia tracked down other resources from the Vietnamese community. The commitment to the learning of others went well beyond the boundaries of this single discussion. In fact, another way to document the formation of intellectual community is to look at the distribution of material resources (flyers for books, notifications of lectures, articles from the newspaper) that appeared in teachers' mailboxes and in e-mail conversations. Over time, people began to share more and more resources, notifying others of lectures and speakers, and dropping off book reviews and relevant essays in each others' mailboxes. What began as the practice of one individual—Nancy—was ultimately picked up by others.[27]

Throughout the discussion of *Good Scent*, the question of fiction's "truth" was hotly debated. Once this question was raised, in turn #69 of the discussion, members continued to develop and elaborate this point through the next 74 turns, an unprecedented display of coherence in this group's one year history of reading together.[28] In the midst of this conversation, the following exchange took place.

(121) Nancy: So you're looking at the point of view, and then I heard you—say that they're presenting opposing viewpoints and trying to make them—valid, and then, ↑Lee, are you saying outside knowledge that you have about a situation so that when you're reading it you can interpret whether it, it ↑corresponds with what you already know or what you don't know?

(122) Lee: I'm saying that if you are approaching it in that way. I'm saying, I think what I hear from some people is that this, they question the *validity* of the voice because he's not—↓Vietnamese. It's not his point of view that's presented. And my—my, what ↑I'm saying is that, okay, you can question his voice, but you have more ammunition to question his voice if you have a *frame of reference* to question it with. And I might question his voice, but I won't question his voice about the story about the fall of Saigon because it feels *real* in relationship to other things that I've read about the ↓fall of Saigon. So that's—that's my point. On the other hand if you don't want it, on the other hand it could stand alone, I guess. I mean if you are using it to ↑teach about kids about

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27 Throughout the duration of the project, we kept track of the material resources (e.g., readings, videos, lesson plans, examples of student work, announcements, etc.) participants brought to project meetings to share with the group. The first instance of this occurred at the first summer institute (seven months into the project) when Nancy shared a lesson plan she had designed around *The Sweeter the Juice*. From that point onward, different participants brought in resources to almost every project meeting. For instance, Quentin brought in several articles on interdisciplinary curriculum; Nancy brought in two of her student's essays on *Make Me Wanna Holler* for the group to read after the discussion of the book; Lee brought in excerpts from the Lewis and Clark journals to supplement the group's reading of Stephen Ambrose's *Undaunted Courage*; Olivia brought in readings about Asian American authors to supplement *Good Scent From A Strange Mountain*; and two of the student interns called the group's attention to Lisa Delpit's "The Silenced Dialogue" during a discussion of assessment which the group would later read as a result.

28 As part of our overall analysis of project data, we engaged in an extensive analysis of group discourse. For example, all text-based discussions were transcribed verbatim and then subjected to a four-tiered coding scheme. We coded each discussion turn from the standpoint of whether the speaker was responding to the previous comment, asking a question, directing the group to action, or informing the group of something. We then coded each turn according to the knowledge source informing what was said. For instance, a speaker's comments might reflect autobiographical information, his or her teaching experience, or subject matter knowledge (as opposed to general or popular knowledge). In addition, we coded each comment about texts according to a scheme of evaluating textual understanding that we adapted from the work of literary theorist and semiotician Robert Scholes (1985). His approach distinguishes between different levels of textual engagement identified in the categories of "reading," "interpretation," and "criticism." We included our own "epistemological" category as well. Our codes also allowed us to determine whether ideas were being revoiced by others and whether previous project discussions were alluded to so that we could look for evidence of a shared "project memory." We entered our discourse codes into the QSR-NUDIST (Non numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theory-building) software program that enabled us to look at broad quantitative changes in discourse over time, an approach that is quite different from the micro-analytic qualitative examinations of discourse that we have relied upon here. The focus here on coherence of discourse is often a feature of group discussion analysis (cf. Schiffrin, 1987, 1994). But coherence of speech begs questions of ideational quality. Speech may be more coherent, but the ideas discussed may not necessarily be better or more nuanced. This question, which by necessity varies across topics and subject matters, is typically not addressed by discourse analysts. By operationalizing our coding scheme, we were also able to assess the *intellectual quality* of our book club discussions over time and to describe the changing nature of participation both for specific individuals and for the group. (See Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 1998, for details.)

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the fall of Saigon, or to teach kids about Vietnam—the Vietnamese immigrant experience in ↑America, then that's different than if you just looking at it as ↓literature, that's-that's what I think.

(123) Helen: ↑Do we use? It sounds like what you're saying that—you use your evidence, the ↑historian's evidence standard to decide whether it's a valid text or not. What you *know* about Saigon, does it match up with what's *here*? You know.

(124) Lee: ↑Actually, if I'm reading it in the way that I *think* the expectations are for us to read it. If I'm just reading it as *literature*, then none of that matters.

(125) Helen: ↑Well, I would imagine that as an historian you bring that——*way of thinking* to whatever you read. That's one of the ways you decide if something is true, does it match up with the *evidence* that you have about the subject, or about.

(126) Lee: But if I read a book about something that I know nothing about then that doesn't come into play=

(127) Helen: [Right, then it doesn't come into play, of course.

(128) Lee: =And for a lot of people, they know nothing about Vietnam, ↓so it's beside the point.

(129) Helen: I'm wanting for us to develop a guiding question that we can all use. And I'm wondering—do language arts teachers use the same—*evidence*—thing?——That historians are always talking about questions of *evidence*. Do we do the same thing?

In this exchange, the disciplinary perspectives that had divided the group, at least since the Stoddard letter discussion, are explicitly named. Helen revoiced Lee's comments trying to clarify his point: "It sounds like what you're saying . . ." She attributes his perspective to his "historian's evidence standard" and goes on to explicate how this perspective might color his readings of text. Helen uses the interchange to propose a guiding question about whether or not language arts and history teachers use the same notions of evidence: "Do we do the same thing?"

This exchange was a turning point. For the first time in our collective history, participants acknowledged the disciplinary differences that frame reading and struggled to understand how these differences manifest themselves. Unlike earlier exchanges between Lee, Barb, and Charlie in the discussion of the Stoddard letter, Helen does not deny that Lee might bring a fundamentally different perspective to his reading. As the discussion continued, group members tried to understand what might be meant by notions of evidence and believability in fiction.

Helen's questioning of Lee also suggests a new willingness to hear a different perspective, to enter into a different way of thinking about text. Lee, too, struggles to understand how fiction might represent a realm in which it is not the factual proximity to actual events but *verisimilitude* that contributes to the truth of a text (cf. Bruner, 1985). In the midst of this discussion, Grace, always a hesitant participant in these discussions, made her first epistemological comment in 18 months, trying on a new intellectual role in the group.

(144) Grace: I don't know, ↓I'm having a problem with why does the person have to be-the author if it's a he or she, if she's writing about a woman's experience, why does a she have to write about a woman's experience? Couldn't a he write about it and research it, and interview people and-and do study on it and maybe write something on it? And just because he's not a woman doesn't mean that he may not be able to capture the essence of a woman or whatever. And I don't know, in this I don't necessarily think that this guy has to be Vietnamese to capture some of this information . . . I—I have a problem with you being what you're writing about.

(145) Helen: ↑We talked about that in our-in our small group, does—did he have a right to write that book? And we said, ↑"Hell yes!" And then he—he can't, I think you just—questions arise because his name is Robert Owen Butler that wouldn't arise if his name was Thay Ngyn.

As the group member most resistant to the practice of reading together, who called reading unconnected to the curriculum "torture," Grace's foray into criticism represented a profound shift. Just as she played an important social role in the discussion of *The Organic Machine*, here she takes on a new intellectual role—that of literary critic. Reluctant to voice her opinions and unused to the literary discourse that characterized many of the discussions, Grace learned how to participate in such talk and was recognized by the group for her contribution.

In this discussion, Helen, Mary, Lee, and others take on new social and intellectual roles within the group. But what has also changed is the ethos of the group as a whole. The eye-rolling and side comments were largely absent from this discussion; the conversation was characterized by respect for others' viewpoints and the assumption of good faith. As Lee struggled with his ideas about fiction and history, people did not dismiss him as "being difficult" or complain about "grinding the same old wheat." Instead, we engaged in the work of understanding epistemological issues that separate fiction from history, speculating about what this might mean in the classroom.

Toward Community

We now return to the question we asked at the beginning of this article: What distinguishes a community of teachers from a group of teachers sitting in a room? We offer here some initial ideas for a model of emergent community based in the realities of the workplace of an urban high school—the stages, obstacles, and elusive achievements that characterize the developmental trajectory of community formation. In developing our model, we have drawn on our participation over time as members (and sometimes reluctant leaders) of this group, captured in field-notes, e-mails, journals, and notes from phone conversations. We have also drawn on an extensive database that includes teacher interviews, written evaluations, and think-alouds.[29] But the primary source of evidence that we used for this analysis has been the transcripts of group discussions of text that occurred over 18 months of the project, as represented by the six whole group discussions that we take up in this article.

We have relied on these transcripts for several reasons. Foremost, if we claim that our group grew toward community, we should be able to hear it and see it in the venues in which the group met. In other words, claims about teacher community should be supported by evidence from the interactions of its members. One of the contributions we hope to make to research on teachers' professional community is to suggest ways of documenting how community manifests in speech and action. Throughout our discussion, we have adduced numerous instances in which new forms of discourse and social participation appeared that bore significance not just to us but to the participants as well. Recognition of the changes in our discourse appeared not only in our fieldnotes and data analyses but

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29 The data base for this project is extensive, comprising numerous sources of data on both individual group members and on the group as a whole. We conducted a series of five semi-structured interviews with group members across the 2 1/2 years of the project, in which we asked them about their subject matter backgrounds, their views on the project, and their views on colleagues. One of these interviews involved a think-aloud task, using a set of readings, including a poem, an excerpt of a memoir, and a historical document. From this task, we attempted to understand how teachers constructed interpretations from text and how their readings differed across disciplines. We then asked teachers to talk about how students might read these texts. We also collected a series of surveys and evaluations related to the project from individual participants. We also collected copies of the documents teachers shared with each other, as well as the email exchanges that occurred over the course of the project. However, the primary source of data for this analysis consists of transcripts of our discussions at our all-day meetings. We audiotaped all project meetings, in addition to keeping extensive field notes. These tapes were transcribed verbatim and then carefully coded. For a discussion of coding, please see footnote #28.

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were the topic of comments from teachers. For example, Olivia turned to the group at the end of the second summer institute and said, "Do you guys *hear* how much differently we talk to each other than we did last March? The voice of this group, I think, has gotten so much more *honest*" (August 25, 1995). This was one of the first times in which the group exhibited its own linguistic self-consciousness by explicitly marking its awareness of its growth as a collective.

By way of summary, we provide a schematic of the markers of community formation we have focused on throughout this article.

Figure 2: Model of the Formation of the Teacher Professional Community

Beginning	Evolving	Mature
1. Formation of Group Identity and Norms of Interaction		
Identification with subgroup	Pseudocommunity (false sense of unity; suppression of conflict)	Identification with whole group
Individuals are interchangeable and expendable	Recognition of unique contributions of individual members	Recognition that group is enriched by multiple perspectives (sense of loss when member leaves)
Undercurrent of incivility	Open discussion of interactional norms	Development of new interactional norms
Sense of individualism overrides responsibility to group's functioning	Recognition of need for regulation of group behavior	Communal responsibility for and regulation of group behavior
2. Understanding Difference/Navigating Fault Lines		
Denial of difference	Appropriation of divergent views by dominant position	Understanding and productive use of difference
Conflict goes backstage, hidden from view	Conflict erupts on main stage and is feared	Conflict is an expected featue of group life and dealt with openly and honestly
3. Negotiating the Essential Tension		
Lack of agreement over purposes of professional community; different positions are viewed as inherently antagonistic	Begrudging willingness to let different people pursue different activities	Recognition that teacher learning and student learning are fundamentally intertwined
4. Taking Communal Responsibility for Individuals' Growth		
Belief that teachers' responsibility is to students, not colleagues; intellectual growth is the responsibility of the individual	Recognition that colleagues areresources for one's learning	Commitment to colleagues' growth
Contributions to group are acts of individual volition	Recognition that participation is expected for all	Acceptance of rights and obligations of community membership (e.g. "intellectual midwifery", "press for clarification")

The first dimension of community involves the formation of a group identity and the development of norms for interaction. Initially, members of a group may identify with subgroups or factions within a larger group. In our project, for example, teachers initially identified more with their departments, or with other first year teachers, than they did with the group as a whole. In a meeting of teachers, individuals are interchangeable; if a member leaves and someone else joins, little is lost. However, as community evolves, people begin to recognize the unique contributions of individual members and feel a sense of loss when members leave. This loss is not only personal. Over time, community members recognize the distinct voices and perspectives that individuals bring to a group and mourn their loss of these perspectives. In a meeting, participants do not see themselves as individually responsible for the functioning of the group as a whole; in fact, this responsibility rests squarely with the group leader. However, as community develops, members begin to formulate a sense of communal responsibility for the regulation of group norms and behavior. In our project, teachers initially complained to us about the behavior of their colleagues; over time, they assumed the responsibility for addressing violations of group norms.

A second dimension of community formation has to do with the navigation of fault lines. In its initial stages, a group may deny differences and proclaim a false sense of unity. During this stage, conflict is hidden from view in order to preserve the sense of a united front. But if a group spends enough time together, conflict will inevitably erupt onto the main stage. As difference becomes impossible to ignore, members may try to appropriate other perspectives by claiming them as mere variations of the dominant view. In our group, for example, English teachers tried to convince Lee that reading historical texts was no different than reading literary texts. With the formation of community, differences among participants can be acknowledged and understood. With such recognition comes the ability to use diverse views to enlarge the understanding of the group as a whole.

Negotiating the essential tension is an inevitable task for teachers' professional communities. Initially, members may see attention to student learning and efforts to promote teacher learning as irreconcilable, locating themselves at one end of the continuum or the other. With time, teachers may agree to disagree over the relative value of the two poles, with different individuals fanning out in either direction. In a professional community, however, teachers come to recognize the interrelationships of teacher and student learning and are able to use their own learning as a resource to delve more deeply into issues of student learning, curriculum, and teaching.

A final indicator of teachers' professional community is the willingness of its members to take on the responsibility for their colleagues' growth and development. As schools are currently constituted, teachers' responsibility is to students, not colleagues. Professional growth is the responsibility of the individual (with occasional nudges from administrators) rather than the faculty as a whole. Initially, participation in group discussions is solely a matter of individual volition; if individuals feel like it, they contribute. If they have pertinent knowledge that could push the thinking of the group forward, individuals can choose whether or not to contribute. As community develops, individuals begin to accept responsibility for their colleagues' continuing growth. Members begin to accept the obligations of community membership, which include the obligation to press for clarification of ideas and to help colleagues articulate developing understandings.

Obstacles to Community

Our project also vividly demonstrates that time and resources alone are necessary but insufficient ingredients for building community. In planning this project, we thought we had satisfied the primary desiderata that had foiled efforts at creating learning environments. We located our work in the midst of the workplace, believing that a group that took root in its everyday context had a much greater chance of survival than one imported from a more distant locale. We tried to steer a middle course between individual and whole-school change by focusing on the department. We had buy-in across multiple levels of the system; from the district, principal, department chairs, and teachers themselves. And we had the luxury of day-long meetings once a month, as well as the more rushed, and typical, after-school meetings.

In providing time to reflect, read together, and plan curriculum, we thought we were providing water to parched travelers, giving teachers the time and space to learn. What we didn't fully understand is that in offering these resources, we created an unfamiliar and confusing social forum, one that demanded a new form of social and intellectual participation (cf. Rogoff, 1994; Rogoff et al., 1995). Our first lesson as change agents/researchers was that although time and money are obviously necessary to build community, structural arrangements alone cannot teach people how to interact differently (cf. Westheimer, 1998). Four months into the project, we worried that our intervention was destroying what little goodwill had existed between the two departments before we arrived on the scene. By providing a regular extended forum for teachers to meet, we had inadvertently created a public stage on which co-workers could enact long standing conflicts, realize their differing philosophies, and question each others' credibility as teachers.

In retrospect, we should have known how difficult it would be to change the familiar folkways of schooling. There are good reasons why privacy persists in the large urban high school. Such norms shield both outstanding and weaker teachers from the public gaze. Few teachers entered the profession to work with other adults. The easy retreat to the classroom provides an ever-present safety valve for pressures that develop with other adults working in crowded and often financially strapped settings. Given a setting in which teachers do not necessarily share common visions and pedagogical philosophies, it is far easier to mark papers alone rather than negotiate with other adults who do not share your beliefs.

In contrast to the idealistic visions sketched in the advocacy literature on teacher community, bringing teachers together can hurt, as well as help, especially when norms for interacting in a public sphere are ill defined. Reducing isolation can unleash workplace conflicts that were, ironically, kept in check by the very isolation in which teachers work. To assume that just because teachers have experience in creating social organizations among children that they will spontaneously organize themselves into congenial social units reflects a romanticism that misrepresents the realities of group dynamics in complex settings such as schools (cf. Hargraves, 1996). Teacher community works most smoothly when teachers self-select into groups of like-minded colleagues. Longstanding teacher collectives, such as writing projects or the TLC group in Philadelphia, or the Brookline Consortium in Massachusetts, most often consist of such self-selected volunteers. Similarly, discussions of school community often focus on sites such as Central Park East where teachers are chosen based on their adherence to the clearly articulated mission and philosophy of the school. While such schools may

represent an ideal, they are far from representative of the typical U.S. urban comprehensive school, composed of teachers with a dizzying mixture of philosophies, educational backgrounds, subject matter commitments, political and religious beliefs, beliefs about students and learning, as well as varying commitments to their own continued learning.

We do not believe that our group was particularly contentious; if anything, the culture of the Pacific Northwest discourages overt conflict and encourages congeniality. If other projects that seek to create community in the workplace do not encounter the obstacles we describe, we suspect that they either began with motivated, self-selected volunteers (sometimes described as "going with the goers") or met for only a limited amount of time.

Community and Diversity

The ultimate goal of a community of learners in a pluralistic society is to learn to see difference as a resource rather than a liability. We experienced momentary recognition of this possibility, even as we struggled to hold on to it. We have consciously refrained from claiming that we attained community, in part because we believe that community is always in flux, always an attempt by imperfect human beings to move closer to a utopian goal. Despite our ability to traverse a good stretch of the territory between a group of teachers and a community of teacher-learners, we remain painfully aware of the fragility of the group that had come together.

Grant monies and incentives allowed us to put together a diverse group of teachers who, left to their own devices, would not have chosen to spend time together. The group mirrored the fault lines we have described—from ethnic, racial, political and religious differences to differences that matter in the context of school—differences in educational philosophy, subject matter perspectives, pedagogy, and beliefs about students. As the group began to coalesce, individuals who saw themselves and who were seen by the group as deviating from the mainstream were pushed to the margins. This process of defining both a center and a periphery for a group is a natural process in any collective dedicated to maintaining a diverse membership. But our experience refutes idealistic notions of the community's desire for diversity. *Community and diversity are in constant tension.* As individuals forge a common vision, the centripetal forces of community pose a constant threat to the centrifugal force of diversity. By its very nature, community presses for consensus and suppresses dissent. Without constant vigilance, diversities of many kinds may not survive the formation of community. Left on their own, large groups filter out from the public space and congregate into smaller groups based on perceived or actual similarity. Given this constant threat to diversity, much care has to be given to fostering experiences that bring—and keep—a group together.

Common experiences provide a foundation on which to build community. This helps explain why team-building exercises—from collective tugs of war to obstacle courses—have become so popular in the corporate as well as the educational world. We too realized the importance of common experience as a counterbalance to the centrifugal forces of diversity. But instead of seeking commonality by trekking through the woods or scaling Mt. Ranier, we located the common experiences for our project in something much closer to the spirit of schooling and the humanities: we shared common texts.

In the beginning, these texts only highlighted our differences, allowing us to see our disagreements more clearly. But this was a crucial step that pushed us beyond the limitations of pseudocommunity.

Our collective growth came not because we lost the distinctiveness of the different readings we brought to *Good Scent from a Strange Mountain* or *No Ordinary Time*, *Makes Me Wanna Holler*, or *The Organic Machine*, but because we came to understand these differences more fully.

In the humanities, which seek to expand and enrich understanding of the human condition in all its multiplicity, a good text is one that can be pushed, pulled, and stretched to illuminate this vast terrain. As our list of common texts grew, we also began to understand how individuals responded to certain types of texts or to particular themes. People came to know each other in new ways as a result of our joint readings. We came to realize that our collective readings were far richer than the reading of any one member. The process of reading together also wrought changes on our own individual readings done in the solitude of our own homes. Like processes that go on in successful book clubs or even successful seminars, we began, in a true Bakhtinian spirit, to hear the "voices" of group members as we read alone. Our whole way of reading had come to be shaped by our anticipated responses to predicted (and often predictable!) readings of other group members. To be sure, our reading patterns were continuous with the predispositions, predilections, and tastes that each individual brought to the group, but at the same time the communal space of listening, learning, and arguing over meaning stretched us in ways that no one could have anticipated.

Why Care About Community?

If our analysis about the difficulty of attaining community is correct, that even with substantial resources, community is difficult to attain and even harder to *sustain*, we may reasonably ask: Why bother? Why bother with a costly process that has shallow roots in the culture of schools and which is destined to fail far more than succeed? We offer several reasons why we think the effort is worth it.

Intellectual Renewal

One of the most important reasons for striving to create workplace community was recognized by Seymour Sarason years ago. We cannot expect teachers to create a vigorous community of learners among students if they have no parallel community to nourish themselves. As Sarason (1990) noted, "it is virtually impossible to create and sustain over time conditions for productive learning for students when they do not exist for teachers" (p. 45). The opportunity for intellectual community in schools is rare, where the predominant mode of learning among high school teachers (for those who avail themselves of it) is some type of summer enrichment experience. But the notion that someone can teach for nine months and then start to learn for two weeks in the summer is fatally flawed, somewhat akin to having a marathoner train all week long but eat only on the weekends.

The intellectually barren atmosphere of many schools is evident in many ways. The high turnover among teachers costs millions of dollars in replacement and training, and the attrition rate is most acute among the most academically able. The higher a new teacher's SAT score, the more likely she is to leave the profession (Murnane, Singer, Willett, Kemple, & Olsen, 1991).

The intellectual ferment of our group offered hope to new and old alike that teaching did not have to mean intellectual suffocation. Wilma, a student-intern with the group, had her first field experience in the context of our project. Only when she went to her second-field placement (at a suburban high school

considered to be better than the urban site of the book club) did her experience with the group come into focus:

> [At the second placement] I was amazed at faculty lounges and disappointed . . . They're like any other work cafeteria or something. People gossip and piss and moan, but they don't relate on a professional level. And I don't know what I thought . . . I thought everyone would be there with their books and their professional ideas, exchanging high-flown stuff, which is naive. But I guess I thought that there might be some place in the school, within the school environment, where teachers would come together. But they don't, it doesn't happen in the faculty lounge and it doesn't happen at staff meetings,

The intellectual and professional conversation that Wilma refers to here is also evoked by Mary, the special education teacher, when she reflected on the group's role in "reinvigorating" her for her last 10 years of teaching:

> I thought at first that I wasn't going to be able to really engage in conversations with other people about these readings in a comfortable way. So it was a challenge for me, I started out feeling very unsure about it and ended up liking it a lot, and feeling acknowledged most of the time, and listened to by my colleagues. So I learned a lot through that experience with the readings themselves but also the experience of being able to talk about it later . . . When I applied for that project thinking, well, I have another ten years or so teaching, what can I—this might be something that will reinvigorate me about what I do. And it has done that through the book groups, through the connections that I made with my colleagues that I never would have made.

Cultivating professional community within schools can help retain teachers who might otherwise leave the profession or choose early retirement.

Community as a Venue for New Learning

From Mastery Learning to Cooperative Learning, from Outcome Based Education to Standards-based assessment, educational reforms come and go, but one thing will always remain constant: teachers will always need to find ways to stay abreast of developments in the disciplines they teach. In fields like history and English new knowledge is being produced all the time. But for many teachers their lifelong resource for teaching is their undergraduate major, a major that often becomes outdated within a decade. New teachers' grand notions of keeping up soon become scaled back and modified by the culture of schooling. In the context of the urban school, professional development most often means learning about a new pedagogical innovation or a new way to integrate technology into existing practice. Within the existing occupational structure of schools there are virtually no venues that have longstanding and deep roots for learning new content about the subject matter of instruction.

It is difficult for an English teacher educated at the height of New Criticism to confront, through self-study, the challenges of deconstructionism in English. These deep challenges to how and what one was taught need to be mulled over, confronted, thrashed out, and argued in social settings. Workplace community becomes the most logical place for this to occur for a wide range of teachers, not just the most motivated who seek it on their own.

Within our project, teachers learned not only new content related to World War II or to Northwest history; they learned new ways of thinking about the subject matters of history and literature. For example, Grace learned the importance of checking the sources of historical documents in evaluating the

credibility of the evidence.[30] Although she taught social studies, her own background in history was thin. The group discussions provided her with a new understanding of how historians develop and evaluate historical claims.

Similarly, Helen, a first-year language arts teacher who had also earned an endorsement to teach social studies, began to teach history classes during the second year of this project. Reading Tom Holt's *Thinking Historically* (1990), along with the full-length histories in our group, provided her with a fresh perspective on what it means to know history.[31] As Helen evolved into a teacher of U.S. history over the course of the project, she used the primary source documents she first encountered in project meetings in her own classroom and asked students to question the perspective and credibility of the documents. Her students, she reported, had begun "to think about what that means, to question text" and attributed her success to the project: "Every single bit of the lessons I've done this week have come directly from discussions about what it means to be a teacher and what it means to think about text that we've had in this group."

Even when teachers are not necessarily acquiring such important new knowledge, as Grace and Helen both did, they found value in the opportunity to read texts they had not encountered before in the company of colleagues. As Patricia, a very experienced English teacher, confessed, it is easy to pay lip service to the importance of multiple interpretations without really paying attention to the different interpretations that students bring to text.

> As educators we can once again experience the joy of sharing ideas, as well as the discomfort of voicing ideas with peers. Thus we not only begin to realize anew . . . that there are many interpretations to reading, but also that feeling of vulnerability that we expect our students to undergo on a regular basis . . . I have seen many teachers fish for particular answers as though theirs is the only way to see a piece of literature. This project has made it clear that literature is open to many interpretations.

Our group allowed teachers to remember how different it is to read a text for the first time, in contrast to the repeated readings that make up much of a teacher's life. Rabinowitz (1998) talks about the difference between first readings of text and reading against memory—repeated readings of the same text. The gap between English teachers and their students consists, in large part, of this difference. Students are encountering difficult texts for the first time, while their teachers have read and re-read the same text many times in their careers. This experience of first readings of text helps teachers remember what it's like to puzzle one's way through a text, forming and reforming interpretations along the way, working against confusion. Patricia eloquently articulated the value of teachers entering into the "discomfort zone."

> Going into the discomfort zone helps us understand what our students experience. To say, "I know this is not easy," when we've not experienced that recently is very different from having known the difficulty in recent experience.

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30 In our third meeting of the project we assembled a series of short primary source documents in history and had teachers read and discuss them in small groups. Grace became impatient with her group members, who paused to consider the origin of each text before going on to the next one and suggested that it would be "better to read them all first and then go back." Over time Grace came to understand some of the unique features of historical readings of primary source documents. The "sourcing heuristic," or the act of checking the source of a document before reading its body, characterizes mature historical practice (Wineburg, in press).

31 We also benefited immeasurably from having discussions with two of the historians whose books we read. Both Christopher Browning (1992) and Richard White (1995), whose books we read, came to speak to the group about the craft of doing history.

Community as Venue for Cultivating Leadership

Leadership is not a personality trait but an attribute self developed in social relationships. In schools, leadership, at least in a formal sense of titles and administrative impact, consists of possession of the right credential rather than on the consensual judgment of one's co-workers. Too often the leader is someone who has completed a credential program and earned a certificate rather than a person who has emerged from the social group and *earned* the right to represent the collective vision.

The existing modes for developing indigenous school leadership tend to fall in the realm of the administrative and political—from site councils, to site-based management teams, to school councils, etc. These venues often draw individuals skillful in building coalitions and in negotiating between teacher unions, parent groups, and district personnel. These are all-important skills needed in large organizations with multiple constituencies, but there is little uniquely "educational" about them. Indeed the fundamental concerns of such groups and the collaborations formed in them remain distant from the core aspects of the work itself: actual classroom teaching and the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to do it well (Bird & Little, 1986).

Within a group such as ours, where the intellectual aspects of teaching were at the core, an indigenous leadership emerged based on a different set of impulses, or at least a different set of starting points. Recall that Dave, the experienced English teacher, left the group after three months, only to return two months later. Dave underwent a transformation from someone ambivalent about his responsibility to other teachers (but never wavering in his commitment to students) to someone who emerged as the intellectual lynchpin and spokesperson for the group. For Dave, already deeply immersed in issues of subject matter and teaching, the group provided a training ground in which he came to see his own fate as a teacher as bound to the collective capability of his colleagues. In the course of this project, Dave went from someone who was ambivalent about his responsibility toward his colleagues' learning to someone who agreed to take on the responsibility of chairing the English department when that position became open.

Mary, on the other hand, began her membership in the group at the periphery, both physically and intellectually. As a special education teacher, her classroom was not in the main building with the English and Social Studies departments but in a portable adjacent to the main building. Other teachers knew Mary casually, but she felt unsure of where she might fit in as well as whether she had sufficient knowledge of history and literature to participate in discussions. For Mary, a thoughtful reader who had an uncanny ability to connect different and seemingly opposing readings, the group provided a crucible in which she gained confidence in her leadership abilities in both the intellectual and social realm.

Together Dave and Mary emerged as the two group members responsible for taking the idea of the McDonnell Project Book Club[32] out of the context of two subject matter departments and bringing it to the entire school. Two months after the *Good Scent* discussion, these teachers requested and received time during the monthly faculty meeting run by the principal to present the McDonnell project to the entire school as a model for how to think about professional development "centrally concerned with what teachers do and think." This presentation led to a spin-off book club open to the entire faculty and staff of the school. As the project neared the end of its funding, group members began to take on

32 The name used to refer to the whole group was the "McDonell Project," so named because of our funding source.

leadership responsibilities for the school as a whole. Several members of the group helped chair the professional development committee for the high school and planned professional development days, modeled after project activities, for the entire faculty. Other project members led the effort to create a new block schedule in order to provide for extended discussion time with students.

These efforts at effecting change within the school as a whole show the deep nexus between the growing sense of community within the group and the growing sense of collective moral purpose. A subgroup within a larger group such as this one (22 teachers in a faculty of 80) can easily be perceived and can easily come to perceive itself as an exclusive club with special privileges and "goods" not enjoyed by all. Often subgroups build moats around themselves; the "school within a school" becomes more than a metaphor but creates the social equivalent of the electronic fence. Rather than paving the way to larger community, the subcommittee can become an impediment to its development (cf. Hammerness & Moffett, in press).

In this case, as the group moved toward community, it also became aware of its responsibility to the larger group; because the group had the luxury of time, it felt a heightened sense of responsibility. Many of the later group meetings were devoted, in fact, to strategizing for whole school change that would support the kinds of teaching and learning—for both students and teachers—explored in the project. Group members, many of them sour on traditional district-mandated staff development, came to see our less-directive and somewhat circuitous path as *the* model for adult learning in the workplace, an insight that countered many people's predictions at the project's start. In the words of Steven, the history department chair:

> What I've liked, ultimately, is the unanticipated outcome, the 'aha' that we might be on to something here that can be developed into an on-going experience, perhaps a model, for staff development. I don't think anybody anticipated that. Many of us came in with high hopes that perhaps we could hammer out a cross-disciplinary curriculum for 9th-10th or 11th-12th graders. [We] ran into frustration with that, and perhaps got back more to reality about the difficulties of doing that. But the unanticipated outcome was, I think, one of the great accomplishments.

What About the Kids?

We argued earlier that professional community must serve simultaneously the interests of both teachers and students. But what can we say of how teachers' intellectual and professional community can benefit students?

Before we turn to more traditional measures of student learning, we first want to address what we see as effects that may be the most amorphous and difficult to measure, but also the most valuable. What does it mean for students to spy the same books on their teachers' desks and hear different responses to these texts from their teachers? What might it mean for students to see their teachers return from a day with the project, simmering with thoughts and ideas provoked by the day's discussion? What could it mean that students ask to borrow the books their teachers are reading, eager to participate in the larger conversation? How does one measure the effect on a 16-year-old of seeing an adult get angry, moved, brought to tears by a book, who cannot stop talking about it, who has conversations with other teachers about it? While we have slogans galore about helping students become "lifelong learners," we provide them with few opportunities to witness, firsthand, what lifelong engagement with learning might look like among their teachers.

In a youth culture shaped by MTV and Road Rules, there are few venues in which students encounter adults who care passionately about ideas and books. If high school is supposed to be preparation for adulthood, there are few opportunities for students to see adults engaged in the core work of the humanities—reading and discussing text. The "gentle inquisitions" (Eeds & Wells, 1989; Marshall, Smagorinsky, & Smith, 1995) about literature that students experience in the bulk of English classes are hardly an advertisement for lifelong engagement with books and ideas.

Cultivating communities of learners among teachers can reculturate high schools, creating a space where ideas matter to teachers and to students. Students can observe teachers engaging in the same activities—reading and discussing text—that occupy so much classroom time. When Patricia reminded her students to provide critical evaluations of books in their reports and "not a piece of fan mail," one student teased her, "Just like you Ms. T, with your books for your McDonnell project." Perhaps even more importantly, they can see adults argue over text, disagreeing over interpretations or responses to characters. If the sources of these disagreements can be made explicit to students, perhaps they can begin to understand why history or literature can differ from one class to the next, that differences among teachers are not simply idiosyncratic differences—Mrs. X likes us to focus just on the text, while Mr. Y wants us to talk about our own responses—but rather differences that may be grounded in different disciplinary traditions.

There are clearly other potential benefits for students. The premise of the model addresses the relationship between teachers' opportunities to engage in rich discourse about history and literature and their own ability to provide similar opportunities for students. One way of capturing such benefits would be to look closely at the nature of discussions in teachers' classrooms over time; to what extent are changes in the teachers' book club reflected in changes in the classroom? How do questions raised in the teachers' group find their way into the classroom? How do new ways of thinking about history or literature, first explored among teachers, begin to manifest themselves in curricular or instructional change in the classroom?

We do not have data that would answer these questions, although we hope that subsequent design experiments might build the collection of such data into their designs. Researchers would need to be prepared to wrestle with issues of the appropriate time frame for looking at classroom changes and the kinds of measures that might capture the changes that matter in the teaching of the humanities.

Though the focus of our project was designed to look intentionally at teacher learning in the context of community formation, we could not ignore how the project affected the school's humanities curriculum. Project books found their way into the curriculum for students. New courses, or units within courses, were offered that explored interdisciplinary links between history and literature. Guiding questions discussed by the group appeared on teachers' walls and became a part of some teachers' instruction. Some teachers, including Helen who was described earlier, reported changes in their instruction that they attributed to the project.[33]

33 The work of this project found its way into the school through a number of different channels. Several of the texts we had read as a group made their way into the formal curriculum, including the novel *Jasmine*, as well as the primary source documents for the Battle of Lexington. In addition, two of the teachers developed an interdisciplinary unit on Vietnam, based, in part on the work of our project, and a history and a language arts teacher coordinated their 11th grade curricula. Two of our members decided to team-teach a humanities course as a result of their interactions on this project; both thought it unlikely they would have volunteered to teach together had it not been for this common experience. The project affected instruction, as well as curriculum. Several of the teachers attempted to integrate the guiding questions we refer to here into their teaching. Other teachers reported trying to foster the kinds of discussions we had as a group in their classrooms.

Dewey's Dream

There are many reasons to cultivate teachers' professional community—from providing opportunities for teacher learning to enriching the possibilities for student learning, from retaining talented teachers to enabling teachers to work together toward a common goal. We believe that local professional communities can help achieve these goals. But there is also a larger imperative. A democratic society such as ours rests upon the premise that individual voices are important, that different perspectives can be productive, and that ultimately the wisdom of the collective exceeds the wisdom of any individual. But in a pluralistic society such as ours, democracy will also involve wrestling with the fault lines that threaten to divide us. From Hamilton's factions to the politics of identity, the unity envisioned by *e pluribas unum* has proved difficult to achieve.

If public schools are indeed the cornerstones of a democracy, charged with preparing future citizens with the skills and sensibilities required to participate in a democracy (cf. Dewey, 1923), then the struggles of community formation take on a larger meaning. If teachers themselves cannot reclaim a civil discourse and an appreciation and recognition of diverse voices, how can they prepare students to enter a pluralistic world as citizens? If we are unable to broker the differences that divide us, how can we tell students to do otherwise? Of all the habits of mind modeled in schools, the habit of working to understand others, of striving to make sense of differences, of extending to others the assumption of good faith, of working toward the enlarged understanding of the group—in short, the *pursuit of community* may be the most important. In an era of narrow academic standards and accountability, it is all too easy to forget that the ultimate accountability of schools is to the sustenance of a democratic society.

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